Tathwell Printing acquired PACE2020 in 1998, recognizing the value a Print MIS solution would bring to the efficient management of a printing operation. “We believed Pace had the vision,” says John Rawlins, president, “and that they foresaw the way the business was going to go. Although I will admit, when I first purchased the product, I thought, ‘What am I going to do with this?’” Working with Pace, though, Rawlins and his team figured it out, and kept up with system enhancements to continue to grow business benefits.

—John Rawlins, President

When Pace released ePace, its browser-based next-generation print MIS follow-on to PACE2020, Rawlins and his team were quick to migrate to the new system. As a market leader with a state-of-the-art production platform and benchmark business management strategies, the firm has adopted and implemented all of the Pace modules, as well as integrating Pace with other internal systems such as a custom online storefront, accounting and XMPie PersonalEffect cross-media publishing.

CHALLENGE:

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SOLUTION:
“ePace was the first browser-based MIS solution to come to market. Especially over the last three years, as more modules have been released, the vision that Jay Farr and his team had has been validated many times over. With the increased resources now available since the acquisition of Pace by EFI, we should see even more rapid progress, helping us stay ahead of the curve.”

EFI Pace touches almost every aspect of Tathwell’s business, from online order entry and job status tracking to estimating, scheduling, production and accounting. “Based on what I see in the marketplace,” comments Rawlins, “a firm our size would generally require four to six CSRs, two to three estimators and an accounting staff of four people. Pace has allowed us to be much more streamlined, with two CSRs supporting our nine sales people, one estimator and one person in accounting.”

Rawlins attributes these efficiencies to the fact that the firm has religiously and deeply implemented all Pace modules, going a step further by using Pace APIs and its easy open-systems architecture to integrate other systems such as XMPie PersonalEffect. As a result, the firm posts a sales-per-employee figure that is nearly double the industry average.

“EFI Pace allows us to eliminate the vast majority of the verbal questions sales people would normally be asking,” says Rawlins. “Where is my job? When will it be done? That is all they really want to know.” To achieve this goal, Tathwell created custom reports within Pace Station, the system’s administrative front-end, for each individual sales person.

“They can see every job, its current status and when it will be delivered,” he adds.

Because of the real-time nature of the data being collected and presented by EFI Pace, Rawlins has also authorized some sales people to create their own estimates and convert estimates to jobs, taking even more burden off of the CSR and estimating staff. Some clients even build their own quotes online. Rawlins explains, “Not all of them want to; many would rather just call, email or have a sales rep come see them. But for those who like the online option, if you can offer it, they are likely to be more comfortable with you than with someone else.”

The company also created a custom online storefront that is completely integrated with Pace using Pace APIs. When an order is placed within the storefront, a job number is automatically created within Pace, allowing the job to flow seamlessly through the system with limited human intervention. And integration with XMPie PersonalEffect makes production of variable data work more efficient and effective as well.

Tathwell also leverages its state-of-the-art MIS implementation when talking to customers. Rawlins says, “Just the fact that we have online ordering and job tracking can be used as a sales tool. It reassures them that we are on top of things. We even let them log in to see where their job is in production, and
who is working on it. This technological advancement makes a big difference to many clients.”

Tathwell even goes so far as to tell customers that they don’t even have to call if they don’t want to. In addition to order entry and job status, they can check accounting records, access past job archives, and check on any inventory that may be held in stock. A mouse click connects the customer directly to a customer service representative for an immediate call-back, or the customer can even speak to a representative from any PC equipped with speakers and a microphone using the company’s voice over IP (VoIP) phone technology.

“There is a mindset that goes with successful MIS implementation,” cautions Rawlins. “Things have to be done in a logical order. If you let sales people do anything they want and quote their own jobs willy-nilly, an MIS solution is not going to help.”

Rawlins also ensures that the system is kept updated with the latest machine and employee rates, waste factors, paper prices and more, explaining that EFI Pace allows these updates to be accomplished right from Pace Station reports. “You can edit within the report,” he explains, “and re-import it to Pace to change the database settings. It is so easy to control everything about the business from one central point.”

“Bottomline, what I tell people is that EFI Pace allows us to do more work with less people, from initial customer inquiry through estimating, order entry, production and invoicing. EFI Pace runs the show; we would almost be out of business without it.”

RESULTS:

“The industry is rapidly moving to a digital model,” concludes Rawlins. “We saw the writing on the wall years ago, and while we believe the industry as a whole will have made the digital trip in five to ten years, we are way ahead of the curve. We can thank EFI Pace for a substantial amount of that leadership edge.”
Print to Win

EFI (www.efi.com) is the world leader in color 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 maximize productivity and increase profits. EFI maintains 23 offices worldwide.