Ned Thomson and Harry Shore founded Thomson-Shore in 1972. More than 40 years later, Thomson-Shore remains an employee-owned company, with about 200 employees generating $30 to $35 million in annual revenues. The company prides itself on its personal touch, especially with its large base of self-publishing authors and small to mid-sized independent publishers. Its tagline, “Helping you put your best book forward,” epitomizes the dedication of its employees to providing customers with beautiful, well-made perfect-bound and case-bound books as well as to supplying e-book formats.

Thomson-Shore had been a user of Hagen OA print MIS since the 1980s and stayed with the solution after EFI’s Printcafe acquisition a decade ago. With 7 IT professionals on staff, the company has created a number of home-grown solutions to customize its business and production systems for optimized book manufacturing. “Book printers comprise a relatively small number of establishments as compared to commercial print or direct mail,” says President and CEO Kevin Spall. “For that...
reason, there has been a lack in the marketplace of MIS solutions that address the specific needs of book printers."

Thomson-Shore has a full range of production capabilities that its workflow needed to address, including two Timson web offset presses, four 40-inch Heidelberg sheetfed presses and two 51-inch KBA presses. On the digital side, the company has two HP Indigo 5500s and an Océ 6320 monochrome press. A complete binding operation—including case and perfect binding, foil-stamping and die-cutting equipment, sewing lines and case makers—round this out.

Even while developing its own components, Thomson-Shore has kept an eye on market developments and was intrigued when it learned about the EFI IQuote estimating product.

Solution:
"We had not yet upgraded from Hagen OA to Monarch," Spall explains. "We always thought the Monarch product suite was strong, but there were a couple of things missing for us. IQuote was the linchpin. We were convinced that with Monarch and IQuote together, we would have a seamless flow of information from the estimate through shipping and invoicing without the need to re-key data."

In making the decision, Thomson-Shore looked at a wide array of alternatives, including larger ERP systems such as those from SAP and Oracle. "What we like about EFI," he says, "is that they are committed to the print market. Most of the big guys are committed to manufacturing, but print manufacturing is very different from automotive, plumbing or high-tech components. There are specific capabilities within the print workflow that EFI knows like no one else does."

Thomson-Shore upgraded Hagen OA to the full EFI Monarch™ suite with IQuote, EFI PrintFlow dynamic scheduling and an EFI Auto-Count™ direct machine interface system. IQuote is a product originally developed and sold in the Latin American market, and Thomson-Shore is the very first company in the United States to install IQuote’s new, English version.
Results:
With the installation, Thomson-Shore has retired some of its home-grown solutions, including an estimating system that had not kept up with changes in the industry. “We thought it was critically important for our MIS workflow to be able to use estimating data downstream without re-keying anything,” says Spall. “This combination offered us a very efficient workflow with one-key input from IQuote to Monarch. Quite frankly, no one else can do this in a way that works for book printing. We did the due diligence.”

IQuote, a browser-based, JDF-compliant estimating system and winner of a 2013 MUST SEE ‘EMS award, goes beyond many existing estimating tools in the industry in that it can be configured to work with virtually any type of print production process.

Thomson-Shore has a number of disparate technologies, and Monarch’s ability to work with those systems creates a distinct production advantage. “Monarch’s SQL database is a standard, open database, allowing us to use the data in other ways,” Spall explains. “For example, we have a home-grown digital print-on-demand system that allows us to produce single-copy books. If someone wants a single proof copy, our POD database can quickly and automatically pull the requisite information from Monarch, and we can quickly shoot off a proof to that customer. The openness is very important to us. Suffice it to say that Monarch plays nice in the sandbox.”

Another benefit of Thomson-Shore’s EFI implementation is its Auto-Count direct machine interface. “We are using Auto-Count to feed actual press usage data back into Monarch,” says Spall. “We are also using Auto-Count in our bindery, which gives us true, real-time shop floor data that allows us much more granular management of our business.”

Not only is Spall pleased with the data he gets from Monarch to manage his business, he’s happy that there is a responsive company behind the product. “EFI’s service and responsiveness are world class, from the top down,” Spall says. “I have been on a late, Friday afternoon conference call with EFI where we needed input from the company’s interim CFO before proceeding further. They texted him, and he was on the phone within minutes. That is unheard of. I am thoroughly impressed with everyone I have met at EFI. They are an excellent partner.”
Beat the competition and profit with EFI’s integrated Fiery®, VUTEk®, Jetrion®, EFI Wide Format, Print MIS and Web-to-Print solutions. Visit www.efi.com to learn more.

Why EFI?

EFI™ (www.efi.com) helps businesses worldwide bring their visions and goals to life with a scalable, digital product portfolio. Our powerful servers; controllers; RIPs; inkjet printers, and precise colour and imaging solutions help companies increase their brand recognition and market reach on signs, buildings, bus wraps, graphic displays and more. Our business automation software helps companies work faster and more cost-effectively. Our office, enterprise and mobile cloud solutions help companies create, access, and communicate impactful information that can win them more business.