How to Optimise Opportunities in Finishing

It doesn’t matter how creative, productive or innovative your print is if the proficiency of your post press portfolio is not up to scratch. The work is valueless until that piece of print has been finished to an equally high-quality and on time.

Fickle Finance

But for many printers the ability to invest in new technology, and therefore make the most of any system enhancements to elevate their service provision, has been hindered by the economic climate and the difficulty in accessing finance. “The last few years have been tough for the whole industry and a lot of investment plans have been put on hold,” states Bryan Godwyn, Joint Managing Director of Intelligent Finishing Systems.

“There comes a time when a company has to reinvest or it becomes inefficient and this time is fast approaching for some printers now. Finishing always seems to be the last place money is spent and this is natural as the bottleneck moves along from prepress to press and then finishing. Those printers that have been hanging on, waiting, will simply have to start to reinvest in their business and their people if they still want to be in operation in a year’s time. Bringing processes in house now seems the way forward. Not great news for trade printers or finishers but a reality.”

Paul Thompson, Heidelberg UK’s packaging specialist comments: “It is a tough market on several counts, including reduced print volumes, reduced print prices and the difficulty of securing loans to buy capital goods. Investments are made to service the customer so knowing your market and the directions it is taking also has a huge impact on buying decisions.

Generally speaking we have seen that price is key but that there has been little or no let up in demand for quality, differentiation and environmentally acceptable solutions.” Heidelberg is working with finance houses to offer deals that allows printers to pay back the capital cost of equipment as they call off their consumables.
They also help operations cope with fluctuations in the volume of work. Securing funding is the biggest challenge Morgana customers are facing today, too, according to Ray Hillhouse, UK Sales Manager:

“We’re working to help our customers, both with a finance company that has extensive experience in the industry and by offering our customers guaranteed buy-back agreements.”

Where the growth is

Once finance is in place where should investment be made? There are two key growth areas - productivity and special finishing effects according to John Gilmore, managing director of Autobond. “Autobond tries to raise the bar in developing solutions to meet the needs of our customers so they can take advantage of this growth.” To this end it is currently finalising a 180m/min thermal laminator capable of laminating up to 15,000 B1 landscape sheets per hour.

Renz expects the emphasis to be on short run Web2Print applications for photobooks/calendars as well as digital print as a whole. “More and more printers are keeping wire binding in house as the equipment becomes more user-friendly,” states
Dermot Callaghan Renz Bindery Products Sales Manager. For Ashgate Automation’s John Price, growth will be in photobooks with personalised printed covers, personalised school year books, financial reports and dissertations, in fact pretty much anywhere there is an opportunity to add value and margin. “With the growth and quality in digital photography and digital print, our Fastbind range of casemakers and photobook makers can open up new markets,” he says. “Unlike general print finishing, it is not such a price sensitive area. It is also a very fast expanding market as customers realise what is on offer. Another plus is that printers and finishers can equip themselves to produce photobooks at relatively low cost.”

Digital die-cutting is an area with huge potential according to Andy Pike, Duplo’s UK Marketing Manager: “With short-run variable work being one of the biggest areas of growth, personalised finishes, such as die-cutting, is a huge value adding concept. Traditionally using a cylinder with expensive dies, this was not possible, however, with cutting tables like the ESKO iXE-10, runs as small as one are now possible.”

Andreas Schillinger, managing director of Muller Martini UK, says short run and on-demand requirements are clearly driving finishing investments while Bruno Müller, CEO of Muller Martini highlights a combination of printed and online media that is opening up new opportunities:

“There are many good arguments for the added value of print products in the entire media mix.”

He highlights the creation of UpCode by Finnish media expert Sture Udd who is also the founder and CEO of UPC Print and CEO of UpCode Solutions Ltd. UpCode is a way of mixing print with a mobile phone using QR codes. An example is a 300-page, perfectly bound street map of Moscow. It formerly had a print run of 30,000 copies, but, with more and more drivers turning to satellite navigation, the run decreased rapidly. Now 150,000 copies of the free map are produced featuring numerous pages with an UpCode that can be scanned, providing advertisements for sales campaigns at businesses based in the corresponding parts of the city.

The growth of digital is nothing short of incredible.

Bryan Godwyn, Joint MD of Intelligent Finishing Systems

The publisher’s printing costs for the street plan are covered by commission, which it receives every time an UpCode is accessed. Sture Udd comments: “I can use a mathematical formula to prove that printing an UpCode on brochures, promotional leaflets and flyers increases sales by 15 to 20 percent. That is why print has a future! I am convinced that print media has great development potential and offers the graphic design industry and advertising customers many new opportunities with innovative business ideas.”

There are two kinds of company says Ian Trengrouse, bindery product manager, Heidelberg UK – those that
want standard, bottleneck free finishing delivered by solutions that can handle the volume of throughput efficiently and reliably and those who have recognised that finishing is a sales tool and added value can be profitable. For the former automated equipment is key while the latter are looking to use the less usual equipment to enable themselves to cut a niche in specialist markets or approach customers at the project stage to sell a concept or solution.

“There is no single product that holds the crock of gold,” he comments. “However, with the meteoric growth in Web2print and online selling solutions there is huge potential for consumer print and for making the ordering of finishing easy and comprehensible. By understanding what keeps your customers awake at night you are better positioned to determine how you can invest to help them solve their issues. For instance, if it’s about how to get a better response rate on a campaign it might be that personalisation on a Flexomailer would be a facility that would sell. If it’s about creating a prestige feel for a magazine or brochure perfect binding could be the solution. If it’s a security issue possibly Inspection Control on press or on a folder-gluer could be the answer.”

Customer Satisfaction

An increasingly important factor in business today are customer relationships. And with research stating it is six times more expensive to win sales from new clients, rather than retain work from existing contacts, it is no wonder there is growing support towards this shift in focus. So how are finishing system manufacturers and suppliers helping their customers maximise the opportunities new developments and market trends are presenting.

Customers are facing increasingly low margins, short runs and short lead times says Jo Watkiss Communications Director, Watkiss Automation. She adds: “It is our role to provide machinery that is cost effective to own and operate – that means it must be flexible and adaptable; quick and easy to set up and run and will provide a return on investment in the short term.” Dermot Callaghan, Renz Bindery Products Sales Manager, says work is ongoing on keeping costs down to help operations...
develop profit generating services. He says customers need to secure contract wins before making investments and it is vital they buy the right machine for their application, taking into account return on investment.

Ray Hillhouse, UK Sales Manager, Morgana Systems Ltd states the most obvious issues for all print-based business is profitability. “Margins have been squeezed so much, there are some still struggling to survive. In saying that we also see some very entrepreneurial businesses out there that have embraced technology and are flying!” He warns post-press equipment buying decisions should focus on efficiency, flexibility and ROI. And when companies do decide to bring finishing services in-house they should look at the products that will offer them the most capabilities.

Bryan Godwyn, IFS Joint Managing Director, points to the ‘incredible’ growth of digital and the need for printers to offer both digital and litho, adding: “It is essential that good finishing sits right in the middle enabling a printer to cope with anything. Innovative printers and those focussed on service and applying technology to help them and their customers will prosper.

There is still a lot of print out there and the good guys will always win through.” Modularity is one way to allow customers to achieve more flexible production says Andreas Schillinger, Managing Director Muller Martini UK. “We are still seeing great uncertainty about the future of the industry, hence investment decisions are cautious,” he comments. “Bolder decisions towards automation have remained in the domain
of the larger production houses whereby smaller and medium companies have chosen to play it safe and stay with off-line and near-line solutions.” He explains buying decisions are clearly more pragmatic than they used to be. “Companies are much more driven by very sober ROI considerations and are actively seeking the dialogue with their vendors before they decide.

Andy Pike, Duplo’s UK Marketing Manager, agrees: “Duplo’s modular technology allows printers to change the method in which they work with small, stepped changes, instead of installing an entirely new line. This allows our customers to grow with us.” He also says precision is vital as digital print does bring with it challenges for finishing.

Friedheim Sales Manager Roger Cartwright says the reduction in business levels is encouraging printers to bring work in house.

“The business case is all-important and has to show positive payback figures at the bottom. Producing higher quality results, faster, increases ROI, and contributes to a positive bottom line.”

For example switching to perfect binding from saddlestitching results in a high quality product and it is only when you show a higher quality finish that you can charge more.”

“Every bit of value needs to be added to a job and printers need to do that themselves,” he says. “Payback time and level of investment are very important, more so than they have ever been. They need to know what the return on investment is likely to be to develop a sturdy business argument before they can borrow.

www.unity-publishing.co.uk
Guillotines are not seen as money-makers but are essential for every printer, says Bryan Godwyn, IFS Joint Managing Director, summing up the way investment in this process is viewed.

“When they break the operation has no choice but to stop as every job goes through the guillotine at some point.” “Guillotines are the Cinderella of finishing,” adds Friedheim International UK & Ireland Sales Manager Post Press & Packaging Stuart Bamford referring to the fact the systems tend to be the post press department’s longest serving piece of equipment until investment can no longer be deferred.

As a result a number of points should be considered when weighing up the leaps in technology that may have taken place since the equipment being replaced was purchased. Health and safety measures for example have resulted in Watkiss’s Hydrocut featuring a safety light curtain and Friedheim’s Schneider Senator Profi-Line range being equipped with a feedback system, light beams and contact strips to restrict the operating range of the transport table and prevent damage or jamming.

The Wohlenberg range has an ergonomically arranged two-hand cut start as well as a knife change protection device, while Heidelberg’s Polar range offers safety servicing and Perfecta, supplied by IFS, that has a unique 5-minute Perfecta failsafe knife-change system.

Jo Watkiss, Watkiss Communications Director, states: “Health and safety is an important consideration. Of course finishing equipment (and all machinery) is subject to statutory regulations regarding safety, but it is important to look beyond this too. User ergonomics and an enhanced operator experience all feature in our product design.”

“With today’s guillotines and current European and UK legislation in place it is nearly impossible to cut yourself using this type of printing equipment,” comments Ian Trengrouse, Bindery Product Manager, Heidelberg UK. “Light barriers are fitted to
How To Get The Best From a Supplier
Andreas Schillinger
MD Muller Martini UK

- Vet your supplier for continuity in its product strategy
- Evaluate its financial standing and long-term view of the industry
- Identify its rate of product innovation
- Investigate its capability to implement complex installations
- Review its commitment to support services

prevent the knife coming down unexpectedly and the law dictates that equipment users must have their guillotines checked every six months.”

Heidelberg supplies Polar solutions and at drupa ten systems will be on show focusing on the issue of networking. The main highlight will be the new high-speed cutter generation “N” with its three different models - Polar 56 NET, Polar 66 NET and Polar 80 ECO.

There is a new three-knife trimmer BC 330 as well. Polar says the range has combined productivity, easy handling and top networking capability.

Apart from various stand-alone machines, Polar will also be exhibiting cutting and jogging systems with some fully-automatic
processes which are increasingly important as operations try to mitigate rising labour costs. Automation is central to the JDF/CIP4 compatible Perfecta range that will showcase some new benefits and a fresh livery at drupa. The intuitive computer controls via a 15” touchscreen assist fast and easy operation with the capacity to store up to 400 programs and up to 8,000 cut marks with recorded comments. It has a slotless bed and doubly-enclosed cast iron frames that ensures long life and lifelong stability.

Accuracy is aided by automation according to Andy Pike, Duplo’s UK Marketing Manager who adds: “While the accuracy of digital engines is improving, compensation of these types of work is crucial. Duplo’s digital cutter creasers are a perfect example. When cutting business cards on a guillotine, a movement of 2mm could result in an email address being cut off. The registration mark used by these devices, means the cuts are registered to the print itself, not the edge of the sheet.”

Throughput and movement of jobs around the bindery can be further enhanced and value added with material handling solutions around the guillotine. The results range from assured smooth and precise finishing to transforming time-consuming tasks into a one-man operation and improved Health & Safety.

Bamford explains: “When you pre-jog work you can complete a lot more jobs faster. Easier handling speeds up throughput. It is an ideal way to create a more efficient process and improve productivity cost effectively.”

Why Did I Buy

Perfecta 115TS

Blackhammer Lithographic and Digital Printers increased guillotine productivity by nearly a third after investing in a Perfecta 115TS from Intelligent Finishing Systems.

Managing Director Mark Cain says: “It was time to upgrade and our old Perfecta was such a reliable machine that we knew the newer system would be ideal. We have increased productivity by between 25% and 30% which means we can go home on Thursdays now! Our front end was all up together and we just needed a guillotine that could meet the demand and smooth out throughput. It has been as good as gold since it went in and we have no complaints.”
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2.2 Finishing

Folders And Creasers

A poorly completed crease or fold can have a devastating effect on the final quality of the printed product.

So to avoid having all the hard work undone, and worse a re-print, invest in a system that is designed to handle your print requirements. Whether your work is litho, digital or a mixture of both will determine what type of folder or creaser is most suitable. Because the digital process fuses toner on the sheet, as opposed to litho, which allows the ink to soak into the substrate, the former can be prone to cracking.

Morgana Systems has been developing creasers for digital print since the technology was first unveiled. It has updated its offering with the introduction of the DocuFold Pro. “DocuFold Pro provides for higher volume folding, in larger sizes, at higher speeds, with an even easier and faster set-up,” says Ray Hillhouse, UK Sales Manager for Morgana. “We have added the new SmartScreen technology in order to improve operational efficiency and make the machine easier to use.” Morgana’s SmartScreen technology enables all job parameters to be entered and stored for future use, with common sizes and fold patterns pre-installed. New features include a Proof Fold Button which checks three sheets before final production. The enhancements mean that DocuFold Pro now offers the same sheet format and speed of the company’s Major folder.

A solution proving to be a cost effective profit generator is the CreaseMatic 150 fully programmable card creaser from KAS Paper Systems, supplied by Ashgate Automation. It uses a
CreaseFold, a budget-priced single sheet card folder, which works in-line with the KAS CreaseMatic range of programmable card creasers.

Ashgate Automation’s John Price states these products are essential despite the difficult economic climate because: “They produce first class results, helping to gain repeat business, save time so that jobs can be turned around faster, are very easy to use with minimal training and quick makeready, maximising staff usage and very affordable.”

Friedheim supplies solutions from MBO and Herzog & Heymann and Stuart Bamford, Friedheim International UK & Ireland Sales Manager Post Press & Packaging, says that printers are keen to learn more about how they can improve their production process and save costs. As such 24hour remote access is offered. He comments: “A lot of people want to be able to budget more effectively. In the same way none of us want a nasty gas bill printers don’t want an unforeseen repair bill which is why our all-encompassing service contracts are popular.”

At drupa, Japanese specialist finishing solutions manufacturer Horizon, supplied in the UK by IFS, revealed three new folders for the B1 and B2 sectors as well as a complete re-vamp of the top selling AFC566F and the launch of a new creaser folder. Alan Harrison, IFS Technical Director, comments: “Automation is a must - once reserved for highly skilled operators, automation has transformed folding into a process that can be more easily integrated into the bindery.
But, while automation has certainly made the process of folding easy to set up, operators still need to know what a good fold is, understand

"...automation has transformed folding into a process that can be more easily integrated into the bindery."

Alan Harrison, IFS Technical Director

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How To Make The Right Investment Choice
Ray Hillhouse, UK Sales Manager, Morgana Systems Ltd

- Cheapest is not always the best - examine products in depth and evaluate the real costs
- Look for value for money such as well-built, long serving, reliable equipment
- Consider the quality of work produced - well finished print can actually hide some glitches with the printing
- Buy British! it makes good business sense - a product can often be delivered quicker while service and spares can be easier to obtain
- See the product in action and get references from users
Why Did I Buy

Horizon AFC566F

Aspect Press is saving up to £7,000 a month on folding after investing in a Horizon AFC566F automated B2 combination folder and PSX-56 press stacker from Intelligent Finishing Systems. Joint owner Lee Masters, who runs the company with Rob Easton, says: “Now that we can control quality and costs and hit the deadlines we are much more confident.

Apart from taking the ‘muscle’ out of the job, the PSX-56 press stacker turns the entire folding process into a genuine one-person operation. Recently one operator produced 400,000 6-page DL booklets, 2-up and split down the middle, boxed and packed on a pallet on her own... and the new Horizon saved us three days’ production time! It keeps the value of a job in-house; before we were sending up to £7,000 worth of folding work out every month. It really does take just 17 seconds to set up a fold, making us faster and more efficient.”

How substrates work and what a finished product should look like. JDF and integrated software such as pXnet do, to some extent, help by enabling jobs to be remotely set up via job tickets.”
Harrison adds that to really add value and build business in niche product areas, more accomplished and ambitious digital print houses are looking at the latest automated versions of systems such as the Petratto Minibat with easily changeable steel rule and matrix system.

For Heidelberg announcements will include a digital machine control system for the Stahlfolder Ti 52 and Stahlfolder Ti 36 for even more flexible folding.

The system will make both buckle plate folding machines more user-friendly and significantly reduce makeready times for each job in a bid to help small and medium-sized print shops cope with a larger number of different variants combined with shrinking runs.

“More automated folders are top sellers for Heidelberg currently,” says Ian Trengrouse, bindery product manager, Heidelberg UK. “They reduce downtime and manning and increase throughput, the key to running profitably.”

Duplo’s multi-function finishing DC-745 will be shown at drupa. It offers one pass cutting, creasing and perforating as well as slit-scoring which is very popular for professional quality greetings cards.

Enhancements include Strike Perforation (for stop/start perforating ideal for tear-out coupons and tickets), Embossing and Die-Cutting, and the Integrated Folding System which is the final step in complete single pass production of folded leaflets, greetings cards and mailing pieces.
2.3 Finishing

Bookletmakers and Collators

Increased automation and faster production speeds to improve job turnaround are the key developments in this process.

Demonstrating this is Horizon’s StitchLiner, supplied in the UK by IFS. The latest version, the StitchLiner 6,000 produces 12,000 books per hour. Horizon’s other drupa highlights include a high-speed sheet/set feeder, an offline digital booklet production system and a commercial booklet production system with landscape capabilities. Duplo’s newly unveiled saddlestitcher is the fully automated DBMi Saddle System that can produce books from CD inserts to A4 landscape up to 120 pages. It can run at 9,000 books per hour when fitted with the optional DKT-200 trimmer and gutter cut knives.

“As well as being capable of handling a variety of stocks we also have the ability to control the flow and strength of the air and vacuum in each collator bin, truly making this the heart of the system,” comments Terry Wafer, Graphic Arts Product Marketing Manager at Duplo International. It will be shown at drupa alongside high performance digital bookletmaker, the Digital System 5000 Pro. It accepts sets of sequentially printed sheets directly from a digital press then creases, slits, stitches, folds and trims.

Watkiss is unveiling a trio of new products at drupa. They are the new PowerSquare with 3-knife trimming available online and offline, the Nearline PowerSquare for variable data applications and the expanded Watkiss Document Finishing System (DFS) range. As an online machine Watkiss’ PowerSquare has been developed to meet the need for the colour sector following high sales in black and white production digital printers. Its three-knife trimming provides a solution for full-bleed colour booklets.

The near-line booklet making solution for digital printers combines a high capacity sheet feeder with the Watkiss PowerSquare booklet maker to convert digital print into high quality stitched booklets. The DFS booklet making system is designed specifically for digital print applications and now comprises: DFS, DFS-B with barcode.
reader for sheet and set security and for sheet feeder control and DFS-C with integrated creaser that creases the sheets as part of the feeding and booklet making operation.

Muller Martini will be revealing new possibilities for saddle stitching with inline inserts for a high level of product diversity for all print run sizes:

“We offer solutions that optimally equip our customers for both offset and digital printing, enabling them to meet the market demands of today and tomorrow,” states CEO Bruno Müller. “Our modular systems are built according to state-of-the-art technology and offer the highest level of investment protection.” Demonstrating this will be its SigmaLine that will fold inline and saddlestitch magazines and advertising brochures downstream of KBA’s new RotaJet 76 digital web press. Heidelberg’s Stitchmaster ST 450 features separate servo drives on the feeders that stop immediately if an error occurs while the specific needs of the digital print market is met by the Kasfold Sprint 3000 bookletmaker, the latest addition to KAS Paper Systems range distributed in the UK by Ashgate Automation. Also litho friendly, the Sprint 3000 model has many innovative design concepts providing a reasonably priced solution to short-run booklet production in digital printshops. It produces A4, A5 and A6 finished size booklets at up to 1,500 per hour without marking the cover or inside sheets.

The success of the Sprint 3000 is based on experience gained from over 1,800 UK Kasfold installations. Morgana Systems’ touch panel controlled DocuMaster MFC was designed to eliminate time-consuming operations by creasing the sheets as part of the feeding and booklet creation operation. It incorporates Morgana’s new ‘DynaTilt’ creasing system, which automatically registers each sheet and adjusts the mechanism to ensure an accurate crease position every time. Ray Hillhouse, Sales Manager for Morgana Systems in the UK, says:

“The MFC sits alongside our DocuMaster Pro product to provide a booklet making solution for digital printers who regularly need to incorporate litho printed covers, or other book sections, into the final publication. The MFC is unique in its ability to crease a cover after it has left the feed station and before it has been integrated into the book.”
Binders

Few printed products shout high quality more than perfect bound books.

The good news is that thanks to improved automation and push button set up, driven in a large part by the leaps and bounds in digital print technology, perfect binding systems are much more affordable and simple to set up with job memory storage for the problem free completion of repeat work. Friedheim Sales Manager Roger Cartwright comments:

“We are still seeing the shift towards printers wanting to put their own capacity in for the first time. Binding is an expensive process to outsource but once demand is such that it will pay for itself, they are taking the decision to switch to keep that revenue in house.” He says digital print is a major driver in the increased interest in single clamp solutions for runs of one to systems for nearline or inline production.

Friedheim supplies Wohlenberg fully automatic to manual solutions as it has found that in some sectors, such as emerging markets, automation is not so important.

He points out the move to PUR is a bigger driving factor now than ever before. “People’s perceptions of how strong a bind should be has changed. Hot melt is now considered a bit weak when for three decades it was absolutely fine.” Printers are also more aware that PUR can bind a wider range of substrates. Wohlenberg can retrofit its systems.

“Perfect binding, especially PUR, has shown growth and we would expect this to continue,” says Bryan Godwyn, Joint Managing Director of IFS, stockist of Horizon perfect binders. He explains the attraction of PUR is the strength of the bind and its layflat capability. There is an environmental message too. Adhesives can vary in their ability to be recycled and while not all hot melt adhesives allow easy paper recycling, PURs are easily separated and removed from paper fibres. Energy savings can be made too as PUR can melt at temperatures as low as 130 degrees. Not only does this reduce the amount of electricity used and therefore the carbon footprint it also makes it safer to handle on the print room
Digital Solutions from Muller Martini Yield
New Growth Opportunities

The more efficient digital printing systems become, the more challenging the finishing process will be. Muller Martini develops innovative digital printing solutions that yield new growth opportunities for the graphic design industry – for perfect binding, hardcover production and stitching. The growing market for smaller print runs provides the perfect platform for digital printing. Muller Martini has built up successful partnerships with the leading manufacturers of digital printing systems and, as a leading specialist in inline finishing, it provides ideal solutions for many new applications with its comprehensive product range – Grow with Digital Solutions.
Most EVA glues work at a higher temperature than PUR. However, the use of PUR does require more cleaning. Traditional glue tank systems using PUR need emptying and scrupulous cleaning at the end of a shift. As a result nozzle applicators have been developed to reduce glue exposure. They require less cleaning up but are a more expensive option. IFS supplies the single-clamp Horizon BQ270 and the four clamp BQ470 both now available with variable software set up enabling the fast production of runs of one. There is also the recently added single-clamp entry level BQ160.

Watkiss has just added the 420PUR perfect binder that offers the benefits of PUR binding on a budget. One of its key features is a unique re-circulating glue system, meaning the glue is not simply supplied to the point of delivery in one direction, minimising the potential for clogging. There are four connected glue tanks so that different temperatures can be maintained in different parts of the machine.

The Watkiss system also has an insulated candle housing, where heat is applied from below, meaning the glue can be melted incrementally, on-demand, saving on both cost and maintenance. Duplo’s DPB-500PUR binder offers accuracy and
security for both offset and digital perfect bound books. Fully automatic, operators can readily access 20 job memories, via the touch screen monitor and all book parameters can be accurately positioned within 30 seconds. It can also be programmed to accommodate a range of specifications including book thickness, side gluing and cover scoring. Duplo also offers the new FKS PrintBind KB-4000PUR single clamp binder for on-demand PUR binding that can run both PUR and EVA hotmelt glues.

The latest option is the end sheet lifting device enabling end sheets to be attached to a book block with side glue on both sides of the end sheet and with no damage to the end sheet during the milling process.

Mike Biggs, Managing Director, Encore Machinery states: “The closed tank Newbind PUR is an excellent total solution for digital bookbinding on short to medium run lengths.” Morgana Systems’ latest addition is the DigiBook 300, a PUR perfect binder for short run production.

Equipped with a patented closed gluing system and a slot applicator for the utmost binding quality and accuracy, it is easy to use with an icon-based touch screen panel for fast set up and job memory storage.

Heidelberg’s portfolio now includes the highly automated and modular Eurobind Pro adhesive binder. Ian Trengrouse, Bindery Product Manager, Heidelberg UK, states:

“Most printers have a cut-fold-stitch facility but an increasing number are looking at binding as a means of differentiating themselves from the crowd.” Friedheim has just added the new dual glue Tecnograf ANT 2000 automatic six-clamp perfect binder. The robust, industrial machine is ideal for users involved in the professional production of medium and higher run soft cover books and book blocks with hand sheet and gauze.

For products that require absolute layflat or a 360 degree turn of the page such as calendars or maps Renz has a wide range of solutions that wire or comb bind. The added advantage is the non-standard sizes can be readily completed. These solutions are to be further expanded with the addition of a whole range of automated punching
How To Make
The Right
Investment Choice
John Gilmore,
Managing Director
of Autobond

- Run trials of work before making a decision
- Talk to peers and friends in the industry about the machines they favour and why
- Read industry press to learn which machines competitors are buying and learn which companies are innovating most in those areas
- Talk to the companies you’re considering purchasing a machine from to find out why the machine was developed and whether the needs it was developed to meet are similar to yours
- Cheaper isn’t always better – a product that costs a little more and lasts longer is better that one that breaks down every few months

and binding systems being showcased at drupa according to Dermot Callaghan, Renz Bindery Products Sales Manager.

Clive Richardson, Total Print Finishing Services Joint Managing Director, points out that spiral binding can present its own set of issues such as pages not remaining level when the document is open.

Also once they’ve been opened and closed over a period of time the paper starts to weaken where binding holes have been punched, leading to torn pages and ultimately pages falling out completely. “Then there’s the fact that spirals also come with other challenges,” comments Richardson.

“Because they stick out they’re prone to getting bent or damaged, don’t stack or store well, and are a pain to post; unlike the smooth ‘book like’ lines of any document bound with the Planax Copy Binder.” As well as creating a high quality looking bind, the system can complete up to 330 pages in 10 to 15 seconds.

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Laminators

Lamination, like perfect binding, continues to be the process many printers are bringing in house and for much the same reasons – reduction on outsourcing costs, greater control over jobs and push button set up that reduces the amount of skill required to produce a top quality result.

“In today’s market, printers are looking both to gain additional business and increase the profitability of the work they currently have,” states John Hancock, Sales Manager at D&K, which for more than 30 years has been providing economical and reliable solutions for the changing laminating and encapsulating markets. He says bringing lamination inhouse can ‘gain more control in meeting tight deadlines, give an edge over competition and add the potential for additional profit’. A small digital printer may look to add a simple desktop laminator but many want a fully automatic machine.

Since launching the Jupiter range in 2006, which now comprises both 25 and 35m/minute single sided versions and a double-sided version, D&K have developed a lower cost option primarily for SRA3 or B3 size yet with the same level of automation and ease of operation on both litho and digital output. The increasing need to turn work around quickly and the rising popularity of photobooks have led to increased interest in double sided lamination and so the latest addition to the D&K range is the Triton B1+ model available either portrait or landscape fed.

With more than 60 years expertise in lamination GBC continues to offer a wide range of solutions from heavy use systems such as the HeatSeal ProSeries 3500LM Laminator that uses hot roller technology to ensure a great finish whatever the subject to the RollSeal Ultima 35 Ezload simple-to-use, fast and flexible A3 Roll Laminator. Friedheim has taken on the Komfi dealership which now includes the Junior model suited to digital printers.

Sales Manager Roger Cartwright says this has been a popular investment route for printers adding: “There is a lot of interest, particularly in entry level models as people dip their toes in the water to meet the demand of shorter run lengths.”
IFS has also recently added Foliant to its portfolio of solutions and Bryan Godwyn, Joint Managing Director, says: “Bringing laminating in house appears more popular, logical and affordable now.” New for drupa will be double sided laminating and a packaging industry application. Among the digital and trade lamination solutions displayed will be the Foliant Pollux 760 SF, Foliant Taurus 530 SF, Foliant Mercury 530 SF, Foliant Mercury 400 SF and the Foliant Gemini C 400A.

It is Europa’s 15 meter per minute fully-automated B2 laminator that Encore Machinery has expanded its offering with. Mike Biggs, Managing Director, says it is suited to both digital and litho printing and comes equipped with touch screen control for easy operator interface.

Also new is the Kisun KDC 20 UV multicoater - a three in one system for UV, primer and water based liquid coating. Morgana Systems, added Vivid Laminating Technologies Ltd’s single-sided lamination products to its range of post-press solutions at the start of the year. The MX-370 and MX-530 models offer 340mm and 500mm lamination film widths respectively and can handle substrates thicknesses of 135gsm to 450gsm+. Gloss or matt prints can be produced on the laminator at speeds of up to 10 metres per minute.

For businesses looking to increase their lamination runs, Autobond is currently developing a 180 m/min thermal laminator capable of laminating...
Why Did I Buy

Autobond Mini 36SD

Sense Creative, Darlington, bought the world’s first Autobond Mini 36 SD TPM laminator with inline 36 SUV inkjet spot UV machine. Managing Director Tim Thompson explains:

“A large proportion of our work consists of the production of business cards and we have set out to create an environment in which we can provide them faster, cheaper and with a greater variety of finishes than anyone else in the UK.

Last year I was speaking to Autobond’s MD, John Gilmore, about buying a laminator so that we could offer double-sided matt film lamination, when he told me about the development of the spot UV system.

The new Autobond machine means we can provide, for example, 500 business cards, printed, matt laminated both sides and with a spot UV varnish one side for less than £37.50 – and that includes VAT and courier charge! We can cost effectively produce a business card order with a run as low as 25, and these can be matt laminated one side with a spot UV varnish, a magnetic film on the reverse, and they can even be cut to a specific shape.”

up to 15,000 B1 landscape sheets per hour, while its popular inline inkjet spot UV solution enables printers to produce matt lamination with inline gloss UV varnish effects, and spot, with such accuracy that up to seven drops can be dropped onto the same full stop. John Gilmore, Autobond’s Managing Director, states:

“Investing in an Autobond machine means that you’re most likely to have that same machine still running in twenty years’ time. It’s that build quality, reliability and longevity that keeps customers coming back and attracts new customers.

“Coating is provided by Duplo’s Ultra 200A is suitable for both digital and offset environments. “When Gloss, Matt or Silk or Satin finishes are required then UV coating continues to be an increasingly popular and less expensive alternative to lamination,” comment Andy Pike, Duplo’s UK Marketing Manager. Operation is via a key pad control while a long internal conveyor aids coating quality, and a double sheet detection system helps reduce errors. A fully automatic cleaning process and an enclosed UV lamp chamber provides for a quick and safe operation at all times.
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for digital printers

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2.6 Finishing

Shrinkwrappers and other finishing essentials

There are many ways printers can add value to the finishing process with the addition of a couple of small inexpensive solutions.

Shrinkwrapping is one option highlighted by Friedheim Sales Manager Roger Cartwright. It supplies the Audion Elektro equipment, which offers a variety of fully automatic and semi-automatic machines: “Shrink wrapping,” he says, “can be a lot cheaper than using cardboard boxes and with recyclable film for minimised environmental impact. It also helps printers expand their services and add new strings to their bow.”

IFS offers the Italdibipak 4255 Evolution one-step shrink wrapping machine – a popular entry-level commercial machine because it offers a choice of sealing only, or sealing and shrinking.

“The Evolution is a great way for printers to cost-effectively add value to their products,” comments Bryan Godwyn, IFS Joint Managing Director. “Its ease of use and tiny footprint make it an ideal addition to any bindery.”

IFS has also expanded its portfolio with the addition of solutions from Petratto, CEM, Photobooks Technology and SCS. The latter’s options include the Corner Master that can create round corners on pre-made square-cornered hard cases and the Easy Fly automatic inline single knife trimmer that face trims perfect bound and thread sewn softback books with cover flaps.

The Photobook Technology range includes the Mitamax, which builds book blocks with any number of quarter-folded four-page sections and the Mitabook - a unique, compact, fully automated hardcover casing-in system designed specifically for the short-run sector and ideal for adding the perfect finishing touch to the Mita lay-flat books.

For KAS it is the Mailmaster 465HS and Mailmaster 565HS envelope inserters, Mailmaster Compact C4 entry level enveloper and KAS Mailwrap polywraper, that can enable operations to expand their remit. The KAS 465HS inserts into envelopes from DL and over-sized C4 at up to 6,000eph, while the 565HS can handle envelopes from C5 and upwards at over...
7,000 eph. Both machines can be supplied with sheet feeders with accumulation and folding in-line and inline integrity cameras.

Morgana Systems recently released its CardXtra Plus finishing unit, an ideal small-footprint trimming and creasing unit for High Street print outlet or in-plant operations ideal for postcards, greetings cards, calendars, double and multi-fold business cards, bookmarks, and even playing cards. The CardXtra Plus is capable of slitting, cutting and creasing, and can be pre-programmed with up to 20 jobs. Ray Hillhouse, UK Sales Manager for Morgana, expands: “CardXtra Plus speeds up the finishing of so many small jobs that the pay-back period for the device can be extremely short.”

Heidelberg has begun shipping its Prinect Postpress Manager. It enables operations to gain data feedback quickly and speedily from selected equipment. It will know where a customer’s job is in real time and will be able to review productivity and efficiency on the machine. All future machine purchases can be linked in to the system. In the folder gluer market Heidelberg’s The Diana X has gained significant market share and comes in many configurations. Also shown at drupa its new braille unit (developed to meet new legislation) and Inspection Control that enables printers to safeguard the authenticity of product packaging. The braille unit fits on the folder gluer immediately after the alignment station and prior to any other process, meaning that the positioning is exact.

Following the creation of a Converting Division and securing of the KAMA UK and Ireland dealership, Friedheim International has added a further two key suppliers – Lasercomb GmbH and Stock Maschinenbau GmbH. Lasercomb is a specialist manufacturer of die-making equipment, including laser cutters, auto rule benders, counter matrix and sample making tables while Stock Maschinenbau supplies sheet-to-sheet laminating machines suitable for all types of corrugated and solid board production, Point of Sale display and packaging processes.

The company also offers sheeters and stackers, and board gluing and mounting machines. Mark Bristow, managing director of Friedheim International, said the move ‘clearly confirms our commitment to this market sector, and now enables us to offer a wider range of quality equipment and solutions to customers’.

How Automation Makes A Difference

“How product or solution that helps cut the number of man-hours spent will enable the user to reduce costs and increase productivity,” is how John Gilmore, Managing Director, Autobond, sums up the importance of automation in the bindery. Heidelberg bindery product manager, Ian Trengrouse, agrees: “Automation is adopted where it genuinely makes a difference to set up and running efficiency; it is not computerisation for its own sake.” He says the bindery is now recognised as the department where greater efficiency reduces manning costs, increases throughput and adds value to the products offered: “Long gone is the image of the bindery as the ‘also ran’ of production, the area where fairly dated mechanical machines would do.”
Andreas Schillinger, Managing Director Muller Martini, points out why it is so important: “On demand and short run requirements are all intrinsically linked to automation. Automation enables systems to be integrated in workflows and related control concepts. Out of this results total control of planning and production with one aspect being full product tracking throughout the manufacturing processes.”

“With advances in pre-press and automation in digital press technology, the use of automated finishing is the key to maximising the efficiency of the print process,” states Andy Pike, Duplo’s UK Marketing Manager. “Web2Print solutions have enabled printers to run work without any need for human intervention, and it is only at the finishing stage that handling is required.”

Operations that have added digital to their litho capabilities should review the finishing solutions. “Traditional finishing equipment often has complex setups, such as a creasing machine, where extra sheets are required for setup. Often it is not designed for short-run production and huge bottlenecks occur when trying to finish very small runs, such as business cards, which when cutting on a guillotine, require the same number of cuts, regardless of whether finishing 10 sheets or 1000 sheets.” He says where multiple machines are required to finish a job, there is an increase in the risk of errors. Using versatile automated equipment ensures work is completed right first time. Dermot Callaghan, Renz Bindery Products Sales Manager, states: “Automation equals less product handling, cheaper cost per punch / bind, high output and increased ROI.” In fact Friedheim’s Sales Manager Roger Cartwright says ROI for automatic folders can be under two years.

Bryan Godwyn, IFS Joint Managing Director adds: “Increased automation is by far and away the biggest benefit of updating or adding finishing systems to a bindery. Touchscreen controls allow for easier and faster set-ups and, because every stage is prompted, minimal training is needed. This not only reduces the time taken to introduce a new process to the bindery but it also eliminates the margin for error and resulting waste. Once trained, operators can effortlessly move from one system to another depending on that day’s demand, and holiday or sickness cover becomes less of an issue.”

Ray Hillhouse, Morgana Systems UK Sales Manager, states automation is a key function in the digital print market: “Push-button products are important for this sector, as they fit with the nature of the print engines being employed. Automation for Morgana includes a growing range of multi-function finishing devices – sophisticated post-press products.

How To Make The Right Investment Choice
Jo Watkiss
Communications Director of Watkiss Automation

- Research the market thoroughly
- Know the capability of your proposed purchase
- Can it fulfil an existing requirement
- Will it enable you to bring in new business, will it reduce costs or to increase revenue? It should do all of these
- Know your supplier – can they provide the advice and after sales support you need?
that can incorporate cutting, creasing, and perforating in one compact unit.”

“We’ve always considered automation to be very important hence our company name Watkiss Automation!” says Communications Director Jo Watkiss. “It increases efficiency and accuracy, reduces waste and make ready and it helps operators who may need to run a number of different machines.

With shorter run lengths it is even more important to have quick and accurate make-ready with no waste.” To put folder automation to the test Heidelberg demonstrators compared the results on a manual folder (a Stahlfolder Ti52) and the automated TH 56. Eight jobs were run, each involving a run of 100 copies of products on 115gsm stock. Given the low job length the machine was run at its default speed of 120m/minute. The TH 56 was first run as if every job was new to it. The same jobs were then put through using the jobs stored in memory. The Ti 52 manual machine completed the eight jobs in 49 minutes, the TH 56 with the jobs to programme in 27 minutes and the TH 56 using programmes from memory in just 11 minutes.

How to Decide Between In-line, Off-line, Near-line or Dual-line

The debate over whether to opt for in-line and offline solutions have been put back into the spotlight thanks to improved digital press production potential and the economies of scale for paper buying offered by roll-fed digital devices. Bryan Godwyn, IFS Joint Managing Director, comments: “Utilising these systems commercial printers can bring digital print into existing litho operations by providing greater opportunity to offer more personalised marketing services – ie the production of financial booklets or health contracts that are highly personalised and require quality finishing to add value.
They can also open up new opportunities for single consumer or subgroup-centric catalogues, brochures and booklets in line with modern marketing practices so retaining and even building on what has traditionally been litho work. Horizon solutions, supplied by IFS, include web-to perfect bound book, web-to-booklet and web-to-fold.

Roger Cartwright, Friedheim Sales Manager, says digital nearline or inline can result in faster production with more integrity and reduced manning. But if one element crashes the whole line would be down losing production hours. Also to achieve the best results the speed of the press and finishing solution have to be compatible.

Andy Pike, Duplo’s UK Marketing Manager, says it is imperative to create a solution that best suits the requirements of each individual customer. This depends on their print methods, but largely on the applications they are producing. “For customers producing just one application, such as personalised booklets, our in-line system 5000 is the ideal solution,” he says. “By integrating the bookletmaker to the print engine, you are maximising the efficiency of the production line, whilst minimising the amount of labour required to complete the job. In a similar way, our near-line systems, which incorporate our digital sheet feeding systems, operate intelligently, using either 1D or 2D barcode technology.

This level of communication between the printed material and the bookletmaker itself ensures that no errors are made when creating personalised work.”

Duplo also has the hybrid Duetto dual-line system offering both off-line and near-line production. It enables customers who are running both litho and digital work to invest in just one machine, saving investment, and utilising space.

Muller Martini has a range of inline and partial line solutions while Renz systems run nearline and Heidelberg sees many printers opting for more inline options on press, including numbering, perforating, die-cutting, foiling, coating etc. At Drupa it will show inline on a finishing line - inkjet printheads and a perfecting module on a Stahl Flexomailer, ideal for two-sided personalised work. Now that it is selling Ricoh digital printing products Heidelberg has deals with third parties to also sell inline and nearline options. However, because many of its customers are existing litho users with

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**How to Plan for Success**

**Andy Pike**

**Duplo’s UK Marketing Manager**

- Invest in versatile devices, saving time, labour, and minimising waste
- Keep ahead of the rest by embracing innovative developments in finishing
- Integrate with digital technology. Do not fight the internet. It is our friend
- Keep track of your outsourcing costs. By assessing your volumes, you can save a lot of time and money by bringing many processes such as perfect binding and die-cutting in house
- Attend events. Whether you are looking to invest or not, we run various applications at shows and events that will inspire

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established offline equipment – typically cut, fold, stitch – many prefer to use these finishing facilities.

Ray Hillhouse, UK Sales Manager, Morgana Systems believes near line finishing allows for the print engine to work at maximum speed, as well as providing the potential for the finishing device to serve more than one output unit. Near-line has the potential to maximise the ROI of products with some post-press equipment, such as the Morgana DocuMaster, used as a straightforward creasing or folding device, as well as a booklet-making machine.

“Any solution that enables operators to multi-task is going to save users money and increase productivity. For this reason, most of our customers tend to favour inline machinery,” states John Gilmore, Managing Director, Autobond. Jo Watkiss, Communications Director Watkiss Automation adds: “The right solution for any given customer will depend on the nature of their print jobs, their workflow, run lengths and what other machinery they use. We supply all options according to need.”

**How to Future-proof with JDF**

“The management of data is not just critical to the pre-press and press stages of production,” states Andy Pike, Duplo’s UK Marketing Manager. “For digital applications such as personalised greetings cards, business cards and booklets, the tracking of each individual job must follow all the way through to dispatch.” He adds that whether using JDF or simply managing workflow using a bespoke job tracking system, accounting for integrity of an individual job is crucial in today’s world of short-run digital print:

“Traditionally, printers would run a single job of a 1000 run length. Now this 1000 run length is made up of 1000 individual jobs. The management of these individual orders is crucial.”

Renz Bindery Products Sales Manager Dermot Callaghan says the manufacturer’s inline systems have the capability to read bar codes/jdf technology for improved workflow. While Friedheim’s Sales Manager Roger Cartwright says networking can help with job memory storage to help makereadies, particularly for difficult jobs and accurate costings. Andreas Schillinger MD Muller Martini UK says JDF helps with the co-ordination of the entire manufacturing process with the full integration of the digital press. This results in minimal product handling and facilities product tracking. It also delivers intelligent production supervision with automated reprint function, fully automated remote RIP and imposition process and automated make-ready of the total line. It also feeds back into the MIS.

Heidelberg looks at production in a holistic manner and tries to link in processes using digital workflow via solutions such as JDF solution Prinect Postpress Manager. The point with JDF and CIP4 is that the system is open and allows users to network equipment in an open rather than a bespoke manner. In today’s market it is critical for companies to understand their market, how they use their equipment and which jobs are most profitable. Prinect Postpress Manager is a critical tool in this respect. It helps optimise machine set up times and provides real life data on machine performance, consumables and even profitability of a job. “This final part of the production workflow portfolio is generating masses of interest and
orders,” says Ian Trengrouse, bindery product manager, Heidelberg UK.

“Standalone ‘islands’ of connectivity will become old hat. Users need now to look at how they can link up all production, business and Web2Print operations. He adds: “Customers want equipment that is future-proof and this generally means it needs to be JDF compliant and have a decent resale value.”

IFS offers Horizon’s pXnet and Joint Managing Director Bryan Godwyn says it can play a crucial role: “Ultimate reportability not only enables printers to be highly informed about productivity levels in their operation but also allows them to give accurate feedback to their customers – reinforcing the importance of an open two-way relationship. This, coupled with precise, down-to-the-penny, estimation, including highly changeable variables such as raw materials, limits the margin for error to maximise earnings.”
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- Shrinkwrappers and other finishing essentials
- How automation makes a difference
- How to decide between In-line, Off-line, Near-line and Dual-line
- How to future-proof with JDF

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