

CASE STUDY:

Miller's Minuteman Press — The Power of a Fresh Perspective

Company

Miller's Minuteman Press, Baltimore, Maryland

Profile

Acquired a decade ago as a single store, this franchise operation now has five stores and a Central Production Facility supporting them. Miller's Minuteman Press has 35 employees.

Challenge

As an all-digital operation, the company was struggling with limitations on substrates that could be used with digital toner-based devices, as well as the lack of economies of scale for longer four-color runs on those digital devices, making profitability a challenge.

Solution

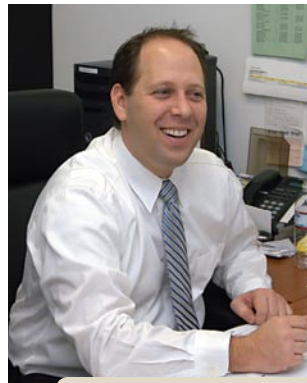
- Two Presstek 34DI® digital offset presses

Results

- Established Centralized Production Facility to support growing network of individual stores
- Experienced 25% growth in topline revenues directly attributable to DI presses
- Converting many clients to four-color printing and acquiring new customers as a result of new capabilities enabled by the 34DI presses
- Reduced outsourcing by 35%

Miller's Minuteman Press: Not Your Typical Quick Printer

In July 1999, after obtaining the necessary immigration visas and work permits, Keith Miller relocated from South Africa to Baltimore, arriving in a new country without any business contacts and a very limited social network. Not knowing American business practices and having a limited network of family and friends to draw on, Miller decided to follow the franchise route in establishing a business.



Keith Miller; Owner of Miller's Minuteman Press, Baltimore, MD

Miller located a Minuteman Press franchise that was for sale in Baltimore, just south of Pikesville. This business had been operating for many years, but was up for sale because the owner was in semi-retirement. Miller didn't have any print experience or business contacts in the Baltimore area, but saw an opportunity and decided to pursue it, purchasing the Baltimore business in December 1999.

In 10 short years, Miller has substantially grown the business by acquiring four additional stores - Westminster in 2005, Towson in 2006, Hunt Valley in 2007 and Lutherville in 2010 - along with opening a Central Production-Facility in September 2008. His perseverance, inspirational and motivational leadership, networking collaborations and his dedicated team of employees have been key contributors to his success. Today, his company is recognized as number 64 on Quick Printing Magazine's Quick Printing Top 100.

"We like the extremely high quality the 34DI press delivers, its ease of use, reliability, and its small physical and environmental footprint."

Raising the Bar

Miller has structured his business as a hub-and-spoke operation, with the Central Production Facility supporting the network of five stores. He also offers marketing services, graphic design, a full bindery, mailing and has a promotional products division. "We are the only printer in Maryland to have two of the latest generation of Presstek DI digital offset presses," he proudly claims.

Continued on reverse

Case Study:

Miller's Minuteman Press: The Power of a Fresh Perspective *Continued*

Miller had been running the business with a combination of digital toner-based printers from Xerox, Ricoh and Canon, three ABDick 9995 two-color presses, an ABDick DPM34 polyester platesetter as well as a full complement of bindery equipment. "We noticed increasing demand for four-color work," he says, "and while we could address some of it with our digital toner-based devices, we could not achieve economies of scale as run lengths grew beyond 1,000. In addition, we struggled with some of the applications which were not appropriate for toner printing, either because the substrates would not run well through the devices, or because of special bindery and post-processing needs."

In 2008, Miller acquired his first Presstek 34DI digital offset press to address these shortfalls. "We like the extremely

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high quality the 34DI press delivers, its ease of use, reliability, and its small physical and environmental footprint," he says. "While the duplicators continue to serve us well for certain applications, we did not want the extra expense and chemical impact of off-press platemaking. The on-press chemistry-free imaging of the DI plates made it the best choice for us." Within a year, Miller added his second 34DI press.

Customer Acquisition and Retention

"The Presstek DIs have been a terrific tool for us," added Miller. "We have been able to convert a number of our customers from one-, two- or three-color printing to high quality four-color printing. And the DI's capabilities have also helped us attract new customers."

Miller points out that digital toner-based devices are not suitable for printing on heavier stocks, most coated papers, or for projects that have special bindery needs. "The static created with the electrophotographic process and cracking of toner during bindery processes are two issues that make finishing difficult for some applications," he explains. "And post-processes requiring heat can cause the toner to melt, as well."

As an example, Miller cites one customer who ordered 100 awards to be printed. In the final finishing process, these awards are melted into a frame, and cannot be produced using toner because the toner melts. "This is a great application for us," he says, "since we can do it with six or seven sheets on the DI. It brings a premium price because there is no other way to do it."

Miller is also benefiting from the ability to economically produce longer four-color runs on the DI presses that can be costly using toner because of the click charge pricing model. "Perhaps even more importantly," he says, "the precise registration we get with the DI press is critical, both sheet to sheet and front to back, especially for applications that require special finishing such as die cutting." Miller points out that precise registration is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve consistently on most digital toner devices.

Looking Ahead

"Our Presstek 34DI presses have enabled us to go after everyone and anyone as we strive to continue to grow our business," said Miller. "With our hybrid production platform and our hub-and-spoke configuration, it doesn't matter whether customers are looking for ultra short runs, short runs, or longer runs, we can easily meet their needs. Especially with our two DI presses, we can be up to speed in no time, with very little makeready. These presses are workhorses—they just run!" ■



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