

CASE STUDY: Furbush-Roberts Printing – Being More Capable

Company

Furbush-Roberts Printing, Inc., Bangor, ME

Profile

Founded in 1908, Furbush-Roberts Printing is in its fourth generation of family ownership. With 14 employees, the commercial printer generates \$1.3 million in annual revenues.

Challenge

The company needed a way to effectively and profitably compete in the growing market for high quality, short-run, four-color printing.

Solution

A Presstek 34DI digital offset press

Results

- At least a 10 percent incremental revenue growth
- New accounts with steady business after installing the DI press
- Better utilization of their existing five-color press
- Gaining a reputation throughout the region as the best source for high quality competitively priced short-run four-color work

Finding New Business Opportunities with a Presstek 34DI

Furbush-Roberts Printing Company in Bangor, Maine, was founded in 1908 and is in its fourth generation of family ownership. Today, the company is operated by Thomas Roberts, and his daughter, Caitlin Roberts Sullivan, Vice President. Both graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology with degrees in Printing Management. The company has 14 employees and generates about \$1.3 million in annual revenues.

Tom says, “We had been looking at digital presses for the last two or three years.

As we looked at our business, it became clear that there is both an opportunity and a requirement for us to do short runs of four-color work more competitively.” Furbush-Roberts has a 28-inch two-color Komori press, a couple of two-color Hamadas and a Heidelberg GTO five-color. “None of them can produce short runs competitively,” he adds. “It was time to expand our options.”

Tom and Caitlin’s search led them to Presstek and the latest generation of DI® digital offset presses. Tom says, “We fell in love with the Presstek 34DI. It is exactly what we need for short-run four-color work. Digital efficiency is important,

“There is both an opportunity and a requirement for us to do short runs of four-color work more competitively.”

because that is where the market is headed. We plan to take this business into the fifth generation and beyond, and to do so we must stay current with technology to remain competitive.”

Tom and Caitlin report that the training process for the DI press

went very well. The company sent a pressman, a prepress operator and a supervisor to Presstek’s Hudson, NH, training facility. All three quickly learned how to run the DI and were excited and ready to get to work when they returned to the shop.

Expanding the Range

Furbush-Roberts prints both for its own clients and for other printers, and according to Caitlin, both markets have been delighted with the high quality and quick turnaround the DI offers. She adds, “Not all printers can print this type of work at

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Furbush-Roberts is now able to use its 28-inch five-color press most profitably on long runs, while competitively printing short-run and fast turnaround four-color jobs on the Presstek 34DI.

“By putting short runs on the DI and longer runs on the five-color, we are using each press to its best advantage and maximizing our revenue generation.”

“The DI adds value to our business and for our customers by enabling us to offer new services and by reducing cost.”

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the competitive price we can offer. There is plenty of room for brokers and printers to add their mark-up and still be competitive. And our fast turnaround is attractive as well. Most DI jobs are in and out in a day.”

Since acquiring their DI press, Furbush-Roberts has also worked to expand its market beyond the greater Bangor area, into Portland and Eastern Maine. Mailers demonstrating DI quality have brought good response rates, especially from printers and brokers. The company used two different postcards, one directed at its house accounts and the other at printers, brokers and graphic designers. “We plan to continue this strategy. We have already picked up five steady new accounts through this marketing campaign,” says Caitlin. “Picking up another five or six brokers should be relatively easy to do.”

Determining Production Options

Typically, Furbush-Roberts is producing runs of 5,000 and under on the DI press. Tom explains, “We make the decision based on the sheet size and the time the customer gives us to produce the job. If one press is backed up, we have other options, including using the DI for longer runs.” He has also found that the DI has made his five-color press more profitable. “By putting short runs on the DI and longer runs on the five-color, we are using each press to its best advantage and maximizing our revenue generation.”

A More Profitable Future

“More people now think of us for four-color work,” says Caitlin. “We might produce a run of 500 for a client, and because they are so happy, they will come back to us with longer runs we can put on our five-color press. The DI has helped us in the overall market, both in terms of quantity and geographic reach. We believe it will increase our revenue by at least 10 percent this year, and we expect that number to continue to grow.”

Caitlin bases this projection on the fact that customers have been extremely pleased with the quality of work coming off the press. She says, “The color is far superior than a color copier, and the registration is outstanding. Our change over time is about 60 percent faster on the DI than our conventional GTO, plus there is significantly less makeready waste. The DI adds value to our business and for our customers by enabling us to offer new services and by reducing cost.” ■

