

Heeter, Canonsburg (Pennsylvania)



Pittsburgh Proud: Building a New Bindery at Heeter!

Heeter invests in post-press, gaining speed and capability while creating a distinctive value proposition. Thanks to Hunkeler pre and post technology the company can keep the pace with time critical projects for the healthcare and pharma business. Not only the throughput but the quality and reliability of the piece were decisive factors when it came to select the right equipment.

Heeter is a well-known name around Pittsburgh. Based in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, the company made that name as a print supplier 70 years ago. Today, the business is still print driven, with a busy pressroom housing both off-set and digital presses, complemented by digital messaging capabilities – a full-service experience for its clients.

Tom Boyle is the vice president of sales and marketing at Heeter. He remembers the late 1990s, when digital print was showing great promise. The economics, the speed, the variable-data capability all seemed to come together then, and Heeter brought in its first digital color presses.

"Print runs were changing, getting smaller," Tom Boyle recalls. "Turn-



(L to R) Kenny Reed, Digital Bindery Operator, Tom Boyle, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, and Kirk Schlecker, Vice President of Operations.

around times were being squeezed, while a lot of the businesses we served – in healthcare and pharma, for example – had to

produce very time-critical projects. Digital presented us with the flexibility to turn things around quicker. "Naturally, the power of variable –

to personalize and customize print – was very big for us, especially for our healthcare vertical," he continues. "We recognized how important that was going to be, and saw it as an opportunity to grow our business, while our customers got the variability they wanted."

Finishing the Vision

As digital print equipment became more sophisticated, it became increasingly important to design a post-press department that could keep the pace and manage the new types of work moving through it. They began working with nearby, Solon, OH-based Graphco, the dealer of Standard Finishing, to select, purchase, install, and roll out some new technologies from Standard Finishing Systems. One

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Heeter has decoupled the finishing process from printing. The printed web is processed near-line to block blocks on a Roll-to-Stack system from Hunkeler.



On a DP8-II Dynamic Perforating Module (on the right) the individual pages are being enhanced dynamically with variable perforating patterns, both lengthwise and crosswise.

by one, they strategically chose Hunkeler and Horizon equipment to add to their finishing portfolio.

Among the first investments were a Horizon AFC-566FG Folder and a Horizon StitchLiner Saddlestitcher with VAC collating tower and HOF-400 Sheet Feeder for both digital and off-set output. Approximately a year later, two more VAC collating towers were added to that system. More recently, Heeter purchased additional equipment: an in-line Hunkeler Roll-to-Roll system, a near-line Hunkeler Roll-to-Stack system with a DP8-II Dynamic Perforating Module and a Horizon BQ-470 Perfect Binder with HT-70 Three Knife Trimmer.

Simple make-readies, speed, reliability

Boyle recalls that there were some running themes that guided those investments: "We were looking at not only the throughput but the quality and reliability of the piece. If you've got a high-speed piece of pressroom equipment, but you're down a quarter of the time in the bindery – or if there isn't a good service and support model from the vendor – then you're not really gaining those efficiencies you expected. "When we vetted this equipment, we looked at the nature of the work we were doing, how we needed flexibility in things like folding, and quick changeovers because of the different types of jobs we produced," he adds. "This equipment gave us a nice combination of simple make-readies, speed, and reliability," according to Kirk Schlecker, vice president of

operations. "Therefore, our production folks have gained great confidence in the equipment and relationship with Graphco and Standard." Schlecker is particularly impressed with the integrity of these systems: "We purchased the VIVA Inspection Software for ease of mind when running personalized saddlestitched books, and haven't been disappointed by a quality defect in the two years we've had it."

Dynamic perforations throughout

To support its Ricoh Pro VC60000 press, Heeter installed an in-line Hunkeler Roll-to-Roll system, as well as a near-line Hunkeler Roll-to-Stack system with a DP8-II Dynamic Perforating module. Printed rolls coming off of the Ricoh press are moved to the Roll-to-Stack system, and processed into book blocks with dynamic perforations throughout. The book blocks are then transferred to the Horizon equipment for final finishing into perfect bound or saddlestitched books.

Near-line makes perfect sense

"It's near-line," Boyle notes. "Because of the mix of work we do, in-line didn't really make sense right now, but near-line made perfect sense." According to him, Heeter has been extremely happy with the process, the integrity, the barcode system, the speed, and the reliability. A lot of the work the company produces for their clients in healthcare or gaming, for example, is extremely time sensitive, "so we have to make sure it's done right and done

quickly. That is a real differentiator for us compared to competitors," Tom Boyle suggests. When courting prospective clients, Boyle says it's not uncommon to be asked questions about post-press processes and automated data collection for verification and quality control. "The bindery is of huge interest to our clients who have critical communications," he explains. "They're vetting and auditing your entire process." Even commercial print buyers are interested in post-press investments. They want assurance that the work can be done in-house.

A great service model

Standard and Graphco ensured that all of the equipment was installed and production-ready, and with little to no disruption to operations during that time.

"They're good partners," Boyle attests. "They really took the time to understand what we were looking to achieve. Their service model has been great, especially during the installation process. They had their team on the ground here. They really shined from the installation standpoint. They made sure that when we went into our busy season, we were ready. The BQ-470 Perfect Binder arrived on a Tuesday, and we were perfect binding by Wednesday," Boyle adds.

Since the installations, all of the equipment has outperformed the Heeter executives' expectations. Tom Boyle reports that each of the technologies is easy to use and maintain. "The up-time has been excellent," he concluded.