

## Tampa newspaper and commercial printer upgrades press to extend service life and gain efficiencies

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**Upgrading older** presses with the latest in automation and control technology allows printers to extend the service life of their existing presses while at the same time realize gains in efficiency and quality that are possible with the higher level of technology now available. Tampa's Newspaper Printing Company (NPC) has just completed such an upgrade, working together with DCOS, a Sweden-based drives and control automation company, and Web

Offset Services, a Sarasota, Florida-based consultancy and project management company.

NPC is a second-generation, family-owned commercial and contract printer of both coldset and heatset products, including newspapers, magazines, direct mail and other advertising and promotional products. There are two locations in the Tampa area composed of seven presses. The company has grown significantly since the Tevlin family got into the business in 1972. They are well known for high quality and consistent delivery for a vast array of customers across the region.

The oldest pressline at NPC consists of what was originally two separate 8-unit presses, now configured as a 16-unit Goss-Heidelberg-Harris V-30 with two folders and six splicers with a gas dryer for one web of heatset that can be run together with the other webs of coldset. Because this equipment is approaching 25 years in age, the existing automation (color register, cutoff control, presetting) had become obsolete. In addition, the main drive system was also reaching the end of its service life.

When it came time for NPC to look at replacing their existing systems, they contacted Web Offset Service consultant Sam Wagner, whom they have worked with over the past 25 years. Wagner was involved in a number of the original installations there and was very familiar with the requirements as well as possible solutions.

For many years, there have been a multitude of auxiliary equipment manufacturers who supply various "add-on" components for such presses. It is not unusual to see two, three, four or even more different brands of equipment all installed on the same press. Of course, that means the printers must learn the differences in how to operate each system and the maintenance people must deal with all the different vendors for support and spare parts.

As the level of technology has advanced along with the advent of PC-controlled equipment, a higher level of automation and integration have become possible, not only for the day-to-day operation, but also for maintenance and remote support. Although many vendors still insist on selling "stand-alone" equipment, a few have embraced the integrated "all in one box" approach.

One such company is DCOS (also the parent company of Illinois-based Tensor International press company). They offer a complete range of advanced press automation equipment, including color-to-color register control, cutoff control and closed-loop density control, press drive and control system upgrades as well as new HMI and press control desks, which have been installed on presslines worldwide, including sites in Europe, Asia, South America and the U.S.

Being familiar with DCOS and their capabilities, Wagner organized a meeting and initial site visit to Stuttgart, Germany, with Mattias Andersson, DCOS managing director, so that NPC could become familiar with what DCOS' capabilities were. What they saw there was a fully integrated approach for a press upgrade on a manroland Geoman press line.

Once the decision was made to move ahead with upgrading the V-30 back in Tampa, NPC felt confident in choosing DCOS to do the job. Having a single supplier for all components and a single point of contact for any service needs down the road was also an important factor in this choice. On the automation side, color-to-color register, cutoff control and closed-loop density control were installed. In addition, the old DC drives and control system were replaced with a new AC drive and control system.

Because this is a press that runs production 24 hours a day and seven days a week, planning would be a critical component to the success of the project. Several additional meetings and press surveys were made to identify and plan for all the details.

The actual installation started at the onset of the July 4 holiday period and was completely finished by month's end. NPC Production Manager Shorty Sebetzki and the NPC maintenance staff worked closely together with DCOS, not only to assist with the installation, but to learn the new equipment as it was being installed to gain a better overall understanding of how the system goes together.

Minimal disruption to ongoing production occurred and the press crews have adapted quickly to the new equipment and user-friendly controls. "This was a very smooth and seamless installation," said NPC President John Tevlin. "DCOS was very professional and exceeded our expectations," he said.

Now, this 20+ year old V-30 has got a new lease on life. Initial waste figures after just a month of running with the new system have been reduced by about 50% and overall quality has been improved. For most printers these days, it can be very difficult or nearly impossible to justify buying a new press in order to increase efficiencies and improve quality. As this example demonstrates, there are now other alternatives available to achieve similar results. ▲

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