

WhatTheyThink?

ELVIS is Alive and Well in Central Ohio

Thursday, June 14, 2012

Robin Enterprises, central Ohio's leading commercial printer, has officially launched a custom solution to address the growing sophistication of retail marketers. The solution, a data and variable print application running on a unique combination of equipment, resembles the plastic card/greeting card print/finishing line demonstrated by MCS at Graph Expo 2011. The solution has been dubbed "E.L.V.I.S.," for Expandable Loyalty card Variable Inkjet System.

Robin Enterprises operates a 90,000 square foot facility with 130 employees. With over 40 printing units, including 9 Heidelbergs and an array of digital printers, the company can handle a wide range of marketing applications from custom-published books to personalized information kits and marketing promotions.

Brad Hance, President and CEO of Robin Enterprises, comments on the retail sector: "Retailers are becoming a lot more sophisticated in their use of client data to create personalized offers. We try to stay a step ahead of them with our own ingenuity." Serving some of the most recognized names in retail, Robin handles every type of direct mail piece the retailers can imagine.

Recently, one such client wanted to send out personalized rewards cards, with the card's dollar value tied to the recipient's buying history. A reward carrier would be used, with both sides being printed with variable information such as, "Congratulations, (firstname), you earned 4,000 reward points, attached is a card for (value)." The final product is a self-mailer with reward card. When the card is presented at the store register, the backside of the card is scanned for the barcode. The information is tied back to the user at the store level, with the store point-of-sale system knowing who brought the card back and used it. The system creates a manifest identifying what was purchased and which card was used.

Add-Jet, a turnkey inkjet systems provider, interviewed Robin Enterprises to develop an application specification based on the needs of Robin's customer. Using their extensive inkjet and camera expertise, Add-Jet provided Robin a fully integrated card attaching line.

Mike Leciejewski, President of Add-Jet says: "Robin Enterprises wanted a unique card attaching line that provided them an advantage in the marketplace. Add-Jet assembled a line using top manufacturers including MCS, Kluge and others. The combination really worked well, and the cooperation from each manufacturer was excellent."

The turnkey system and line configuration starts with a card feeder. Once the cards come out of the feeder, an MCS Perfect Match system captures an image of the card. From the decoded information on the backside of the card, an MCS Array inkjet prints a custom message on the carrier. The card is affixed to the corresponding carrier, and the carrier card is scored, glued, and folded. Then the second MCS Inkjet sprays the corresponding address on the outside panel after the plow folder.

The line is comprised of a card attacher, two MCS Inkjet Systems, an MCS industrial camera and tracking system as well as a Kluge plow folder with in-line scoring. What made it attractive to the folks at Robin was the fact that it was so turnkey, with installation, support, and upgrades provided by a single point contact at Add-Jet.

"At first, it just looked like a hodgepodge to me," notes Hance. "It's this long, hybrid, integration of several pieces of best-in-class equipment - more commonly seen in a bindery operation than card production plant" he explains. The software and tracking system make it easy for the bindery team to run. And run it they do, because business is flourishing.

The naming exercise began when the operators started referring to the line as The Beast, after a roller coaster with the same moniker. Then Hance and his estimator continued the naming exercise in earnest. Hance recalls: "First, we went the Greek god route, with the obvious tie-ins like Zues, king of the gods. Then we went down the musician path, Led Zeppelin, Beastly Boyz, etc. Finally, we got to the The King, and the next idea, Elvis, was the obvious winner." And it translated well into a meaningful acronym: Expandable Loyalty card Variable Inkjet System.

"To have a name for it really gets people engaged," says Hance. "We even shot a video and showed it to the client." A more professional version of video will be released soon. ELVIS fans, stay tuned!

Copyright © 2012 WhatTheyThink.