New Equipment Purchase Helps Direct Marketing Firm Achieve Brisk Growth

Tobe Direct Attributes 54% Growth To MCS Inkjet Model

NEW YORK, NY -- John Tobe got his start in the print business while still in high school. His father owned a typesetting company, and John would run from client to client to pick up orders and deliver them to the "plant" in the basement. While doing so, he developed a keen understanding of customer wants and needs, a skill that would serve him well in the years to come.

Serving National Brands

John Tobe founded Tobe Direct in 1988, with typesetting and a Multilith 1250 printing press.

In the early 1990's, one of his biggest customers was Papa John's. At the time, Papa John's franchisees were making local print purchases for their flyers and collateral. The result was a hodge-podge of materials that didn't look the same from location to location. So Mr. Tobe put all of the items in a corporate catalog, franchisees made their selections, and he would gang the orders and administer them in a co-op program. The program later became Papa John's Print Network, which he sold to Papa John's in 1994.

Impressive Results

By upgrading its equipment, Tobe Direct achieved these results:

• Improved run speeds by 33%

• Spending 50% less on ink

• Higher throughput which allows them to handle more jobs

• Expanding space by 300%

Today, Tobe Direct serves national consumer brands and retailers, providing turnkey direct mail programs and 1:1 marketing campaigns with targeted offers based on sophisticated data manipulation capabilities.
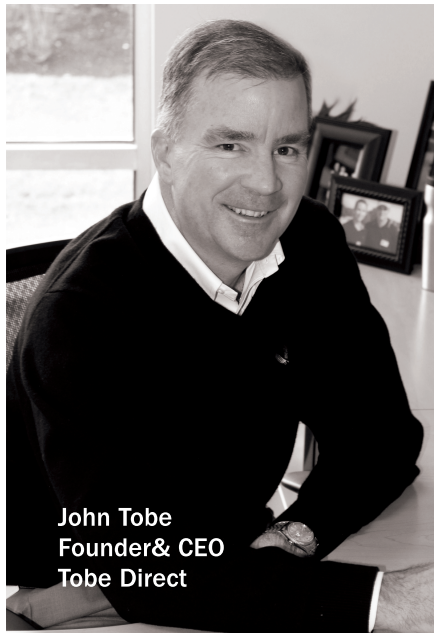
John Tobe
Founder & CEO
Tobe Direct

Mr. Tobe's first MCS purchase was in 2009 with the MCS Array inkjet system. He already had a Kodak 5120 and needed more inkjet equipment for their postcard and self-mailer jobs, and the Array system fit the bill nicely.

Since then, Tobe Direct has acquired more clients and unique applications, needing the ability to run jobs from as small as a few thousand to several million postcards per job. They chose the MCS Eagle UV for several reasons, one of which was the permanent print head -- there is no switching of cartridges between jobs, and no having to manage different inks for different stocks. They also liked the speed and the price point.

Phenomenal Growth

"We've been aggressively expanding our business for the past three years, but 2011 was our breakout year -- we grew fifty-four percent," said Mr. Tobe. "We don't engage in 'build it and they will come.' We concentrate on the program and the customer needs, and then build the capabilities that it requires."

One of the reasons for this astounding growth was due to a major award from a F50 account for their direct mail postcard business. Tobe Direct was awarded a multi-year contract, which boosts their requirement for production throughput and added capacity. They are presently expanding their space by 300% to handle the work.

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Mr. Tobe's business model has broadened well beyond simple direct mailings. For many projects, the Tobe Direct team starts their process by manipulating sophisticated data sets -- such as customer buying patterns -- and designs variable mailing offers based on that. Often this results in fully variable images and versioned coupons that can only be produced on a color digital press. To accommodate the increase in this production, Mr. Tobe added an 80 page-per-minute color digital press as well as a 120 page-per-minute monochrome digital press and workflow products from MCS' Digital Product Family.

Eagle Inkjet Platform Ideal For Production Mailing

MCS, maker of the Eagle Inkjet platform, has served the production mailing market for many years. The company's inkjet hardware, software, and camera systems provides the integration for high-speed mailing and hybrid inkjet printing as well as matching systems for inserters.

The Eagle Inkjet platform combines modular 4.25", 600 dpi print head technology with MCS' job layout and print proofing software. MCS systems can be integrated on various existing transports and inserters.

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