



"The CRF-362 Creaser/Folder performs both creasing and perfining, removing some of the work from our traditional bindery and enabling us to meet the tight turnaround times today's digital customers demand, and we have reduced the amount of work sent to our traditional bindery by 50%."



Slate Group Marks Recent Name Change with...

Think BIG, Print BIG Investments!

5X Throughput Improvement Benefits Company's Digital Department.

Slate Group began nearly 30 years ago as a copy shop and has long outgrown its original Copy Craft moniker. At \$25 million in annual revenues, this commercial printing company is starting with a fresh slate.

Slate Group offers offset, digital and display graphics printing as well as graphic design and direct mailing services for clients locally and nationwide. "We've become a full-service regional solutions provider," said Brad Phinny, the company's Chief Operating Officer. "We realized last year that our bookletmaking capabilities were not able to keep up with today's demands. The throughput and durability of the existing equipment was not what we needed to sustain growth and deliver exceptional customer service, nor was the quality of output we were getting. At Print 13, we started looking to refresh it."

Slate Group has 40" and 29" offset, a variety of HP Indigo digital presses, large format and a full bindery across its two locations in Lubbock and Austin, Texas. The company was impressed with the Standard Horizon solutions at the show and worked with Standard's local dealer, Tim Ross of Cobblestone Graphic Equipment, to seek his advice and narrow down options.

"We then visited the Standard demo facility in Boston," Phinny explains. "We provided them with a variety of different applications and substrates and saw the bookletmaking equipment in action. Almost as an afterthought, we spent time



Slate Group CEO Brad Phinny (L) and President Marc Hayes (R), with their new bookletmaker and local dealer, Tim Ross, President, Cobblestone Graphic Equipment. (C)

with their new creaser/folder unit, and after seeing it operate, it was a no-brainer to add it to our new configuration."

To meet its growing bindery needs and to support the output from its fleet of digital presses, Slate Group chose to acquire a completely new bookletmaking line consisting of Standard Horizon's HOF-400 High Speed Sheet Feeder, the CR-400 Creaser/Bleed Trimmer, the SPF-200A Bookletmaker, and the FC-200A Face Trimmer. "The installation went smoothly," Phinny adds, "and once it was up and running, we were stunned at its performance compared to our previous line."

Another benefit for Slate Group was the ability to do more of its finishing in its digital department without having to

send work to the traditional bindery, often interrupting longer run work in doing so. Phinny remarks that the company's previous configuration could not fold cover weight stock. "We were also excited about the ability of the CRF-362 Creaser/Folder to do both creasing and perfining, removing some work from our traditional bindery and enabling us to meet the tight

turnaround times today's digital customers demand, and we have reduced the amount of work sent to our traditional bindery by 50%. With the new configuration, we were also able to eliminate the pre-trimming of booklets on the sides. We are getting product through the digital bindery five times faster than we were able to before! We were even able to transition one of our nighttime bindery operators into a different position, definitely a part of the payback calculation on this outstanding equipment."

Phinny also explains that the company's previous configuration often required several passes to adequately bind work, requiring manual collation and a trip to the traditional bindery for final stitching. Its new CRF-362 Creaser/Folder handles thicker stocks for scoring covers used in the bookletmaking process, and also

accommodates a number of fold patterns including gate folds for a variety of other applications.

Phinny is also pleased with the ease of use of the Standard Horizon equipment. "You can store up to 200 jobs, and the menus make it very easy to use, meaning less training time for operators," he says. "We will be looking to Cobblestone Graphic Equipment and Standard for more solutions in the future as we continue to refine our infrastructure."

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