

Up to 4,500 B2 Sheets/Hour!

AccuLink's new Horizon SmartStacker has replaced two 45" cutters that required four operators, and currently runs at only 25% capacity, leaving plenty of room for growth. At right, Bindery Manager Ken Cortright monitors the system.



Increasing Productivity!

At left, Bindery Operator Melissa Pauley runs the Standard Horizon CRF-362 which has allowed AccuLink to bring in more creasing and folding work, while Mike Bomar, Production Manager, operates the company's Standard Horizon AFC Folder.

Operating in an 80,000 square foot facility in Greenville, NC

Automation Drives Bottleneck Out of Finishing for AccuLink.

Embracing the fast-paced world of communications with a blend of creativity, technology, manufacturing, and fulfillment.



When a new opportunity walked in the door a little more than a year ago, AccuLink was eager to take on the business, but knew their growth path would have to be carefully managed. "We were one of several companies recommended by our Dscoop colleagues when a large provider of personalized printed products was seeking an East Coast manufacturing

in. Serving the trade has been an excellent business for us, and we have never looked back."

The opportunity presented by this new customer, however, wasn't your ordinary trade print deal. "We could foresee this adding huge volumes to our business," O'Brien commented,

time partner, Standard Finishing, for a solution. I've been a Standard fan since I bought my first piece of equipment from them 30 years ago. If Standard makes a solution that meets my needs, I'm not going anywhere else."

AccuLink chose to acquire a Standard Horizon SmartStacker to address its finishing bottleneck for business cards, invitations and other types of cut cards. "The new addition has completely streamlined this part of our business," O'Brien added. "We use HP's Direct-to-Finish solution to place a barcode on the cover sheet for each job to automatically set up the SmartStacker, and it works like a dream."

Now AccuLink moves skids of work from its digital printers to the SmartStacker. The operator basically pushes a button and walks away. "The SmartStacker reads the barcodes and automatically sets itself up from job to job," O'Brien noted. "In

AccuLink depends on other Standard Horizon equipment in its shop as well. A CRF-362 Creaser/Folder has been in place for about two years following installation of an HP Indigo 10000, which brought more creasing/folding work to the shop. "We couldn't turn that work around quickly enough on our previous equipment," O'Brien said. "We had to crease first and fold second, and that simply took too much time in the fast-turn, short-run world we operate in." O'Brien reported that, like the SmartStacker, the CRF-362 is a "set it and forget it" device that his Bindery Manager Ken Cortright loves working with.

The company also uses an RD-4055 Rotary Die Cutter, which can die-cut, crease, perforate, slit, hole punch, and round corner in one process for digital and offset printed sheets. "This one requires an operator because it puts out work so fast," O'Brien explained. "Someone has to be present on the delivery end to keep up with the output. It's a real workhorse."



Tom O'Brien, Operations Manager, and Wayne Renn, VP of Manufacturing, show B2-format samples, which are moved directly to the SmartStacker.



In the bindery at AccuLink, Alex Cortright works with the Standard Horizon SmartStacker.



Bindery Specialist Liz Smith uses the Standard Horizon RD-4055 Die Cutter to produce business cards and other die-cut materials at lightning speed.

partner," said Tom O'Brien, the company's Operations Manager. "The scenario they presented, and the volumes they predicted, were scary, but my brother Paul, our IT guru, and I were up for the challenge."

Since 1980, AccuLink has embraced the fast-paced world of communications with a blend of creativity, technology, manufacturing, and fulfillment. The company operates an 80,000 square foot facility on a 12-acre campus in Greenville, NC, and has clients in all 50 states, as well as internationally. AccuLink produces high value-added solutions for marketing campaigns, fundraising programs, employee benefit initiatives, self-publications, and packaging challenges, primarily serving the trade.

"After a number of years operating a retail copy shop," O'Brien explained, "we kind of backed into trade work when a major East Coast supplier to the trade failed and we were able to step

"and we knew we needed to review our entire operation to ensure we could handle the work."

The first step was to engineer a workflow that could take the job stream sent by the customer and others, and automate it to the fullest extent possible. "Paul did a great job of writing this workflow in less than a month," O'Brien reported. "We catch files of all kinds for all types of different products as they are coming in 24/7. The workflow automatically sorts out applications, from business cards and invitations to dye sublimation jobs, aggregates like products, and imposes jobs according to the target press and substrate."

With this configuration, AccuLink had no problem keeping up with the printing, QC, pick-and-pack and fulfillment, but finishing was still a bottleneck. "We had four people working 10 to 15 hours per day operating two 45" cutters and we couldn't keep up," said O'Brien. "That's when we turned to our long-

addition to the 150,000 to 200,000 cards per day we produce for the provider of personalized printed products, we are also serving the card needs of several other large players. There is no way we could have profitably supported this business without this fabulous piece of equipment." O'Brien pointed out that not only has the SmartStacker replaced the two 45" cutters that required four operators, it is currently running at about 25% capacity, leaving plenty of room for growth.

Prior to acquiring the large volume of personalized work, AccuLink employed 50 people. "We now have 115 employees, and during peak season last year (Black Friday through Christmas Eve), we added 70 additional temporary workers to handle the volume. 2017 looks like it will be even busier, and we expect to end the year at about \$15 million in annual revenue."

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Perfect bound books at AccuLink are produced using Standard Horizon BQ-160 and BQ-270 Perfect Binders that work in conjunction with an HT-30 Three-Side Trimmer. A Standard Horizon bookletmaker provides fast, accurate production of booklets, and a Standard Horizon folder rounds out the finishing operation.

"Because we are a trade shop," O'Brien said, "we need to have everything in-house so we can quickly turn jobs around without the associated delays when work has to be outsourced for finishing. Our customers just want to send the work, and have us drop ship it back or white label direct to their customer, with no fuss or muss. Standard Horizon is a key partner that helps us get this done!"