

## AGS Corporate Mission

Our mission is to be a key asset to our customers. Our daily commitment is to utilize our expertise and knowledge to develop innovative print and marketing solutions to help our customers exceed their business goals. Critical elements to our success are our team, customers, standards, and community.



A Kodak Prosper 5000XL wide-web inkjet press has been complemented with a Standard Hunkeler PF7 Double Plow-Folder. A Standard Hunkeler UW6 Unwinder, a CS6 Cutter, and a Standard Horizon StitchLiner 6000 Digital makes for one lightning-fast saddlestitching workflow.

Standard equipment helps AGS fulfill its corporate mission

**ConsolidatedGraphics**

# CGX Operating Companies Achieve Distinction with Standard Finishing Systems

With 70 different operating companies spanning the globe, it's all about customer service.

"We have 70 different operating companies. And that's what we call them – operating companies – not 'plants' or 'factories,' because each one of these companies has a President with a lot of autonomy in how they run their business," according to Ric Davis, Executive Vice President, Purchasing and Operations, Consolidated Graphics, Inc., Houston, TX.

The 70 operating companies that comprise Consolidated Graphics – publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange under ticker symbol CGX – span the globe and represent more than \$1 billion in annual sales.

Despite the operational autonomy, CGX operating companies share a common mantra: Customer service is paramount.

"Our entire focus is on the customer," Davis asserts. "What does the customer want? What can we do to service the customer? ...That's how we differentiate ourselves."

It's this customer-service focus that also drives Consolidated Graphics' equipment investments. "Rather than have the operating company Presidents become equipment experts, we free them up to be customer experts. So we can say to them, 'You guys define what your customer wants, and we'll work with the manufacturers and figure out what's best,'" Davis says, explaining the role his Houston-based Purchasing and Operations group serves to support the individual CGX operating companies.

It's Jeff Ude's mission to ensure that the CGX operating companies are matched with the best solution. As Consolidated Graphics' Purchasing Manager, Ude travels the country, staying apprised of new technological innovations as they come to market.

"Jeff is our digital and mailing expert," Davis notes. "He spends a lot of time on the road, traveling, looking at new pieces of equipment as they're being developed. We do a lot of beta testing for new pieces of equipment. So when someone says, 'Hey, I need a stitcher for digitally produced books,' Jeff knows what that solution looks like."

If a piece of digital print or finishing equipment is deemed successful at one of CGX's operating companies, it's likely to be considered for others.

"We tend to try it in one location, prove that it works, monitor total cost of ownership," Davis confides, "and then once we



Joe Dziedzic, AGS Lead Digital Production Specialist monitors the finishing requirements of a customer booklet through the Standard Hunkeler CS6 cutter.

find a solution that works, you'll see it spread across our company, because we don't want to have to start from scratch at every location."

## Finishing: Where It Counts

In recent years, CGX companies have become heavily vested in digital print, including digital inkjet web technology.

"We get excited about how many feet-per-second a press can print," Davis acknowledges. "The presses are speedy, but it's what's in front of it ... and it's finishing that really matters. After all, we're not shipping a roll of paper to anyone."

And when it comes to finishing equipment, Davis suggests that "flexibility" is top priority. It's why most of the CGX finishing operations adhere to a near-line model, with one exception.

"Sometimes the way the workflow gets from Point A to Point B is a little different," Ude explains. "For example, White-Plains, Maryland-based AGS' needs are very different from those of Veritas Document Solutions, located in Buffalo Grove, IL. We purchased Standard Hunkeler equipment for both locations, but we did it in different ways. At Veritas, we went in-line. We

hadn't done that before with inkjet, but in this case, we went in-line, because it was a good fit."

Though the workflow requirements may vary, both AGS and Veritas have heavily, but strategically, invested in finishing solutions.

At AGS, a new Standard Horizon BQ-270 Perfect Binder has found a home. The company's Kodak Prosper 5000XL wide-web inkjet press has been complemented with a Standard Hunkeler PF7 Double Plow-Folder. And a Standard Hunkeler UW6 Unwinder, a CS6 Cutter, and a Standard Horizon StitchLiner 6000 Digital makes for one lightning-fast saddlestitching workflow.

**The presses are speedy, but it's what's in front of it ... and it's finishing that really matters. It doesn't count until it's finished.**

Meanwhile, Veritas was installing Standard Hunkeler roll-to-cut stack solutions on the back ends of digital presses from Hewlett-Packard (HP) and Xerox Corporation. Also new to Veritas' production floor are a Standard Horizon Stitchliner 5500, a Standard Horizon BQ-470 Perfect Binder, and a Standard Horizon HT-70 Three-knife Trimmer.

These are but two examples of the significant investments in finishing that CGX companies have made in the past year. CGX organizations like Frederic Printing (Aurora, CO), CDS Publications (Medford, OR), Maximum Graphics (Chaska, MN), Mercury Printing (Memphis, TN), and The Hennegan Company (Florence, KY) have all recently installed Standard Horizon and Standard Hunkeler equipment.

Perhaps CGX's greatest challenge is not only identifying, testing



Tommy Greene, Digital Production Specialist and Mike Schaffer, Digital Finishing Specialist make final adjustments to the Standard Horizon Stitchliner 6000 Digital at AGS. Pre-printed rolls are converted to cut sheets and then booklets in a single pass with no touch points.

and implementing solutions that meet an existing need, but in being forward-thinking about the future of an operating company, as well as the future of the investment itself. Ideally, every piece of finishing equipment is capable of growing with the company, but in cases where it may be outgrown, there's the chance at a second life.

"With our inkjet finishing lines, for example, we'll make several changes over the course of the next couple of years, and that's part of what we like about the Standard equipment. It's almost

like workflow building blocks. You can pull one piece of equipment out of the workflow and replace it with another," Davis suggests. This also enables CGX to move equipment from one operating company to another that may

have a new or growing need for a particular capability.

"We've done that so many times in our digital operations," Ude concurs. "We change equipment out, move things around, change the workflow. We've moved more equipment than you can imagine."

## Matters of Distinction

Equipment flexibility may be a top priority to CGX, but nearly as critical is the need for sound investment in technologies that differentiate CGX operating companies from competitors, according to Ude.

"We're going to do the jobs that other people may shy away from," Davis concurs. "We're going to do the hard stuff – the stuff that's very quick-turn and very high quality."

The investments made in Standard Horizon and Standard Hunkeler equipment have proven wise. "Total cost of throughput is really important," Davis suggests.

"What are the throughput numbers? What is the down time? And how difficult is it to train somebody? We look at all those things, because at the end of the day, if the piece of equipment isn't running – for whatever reason, it's down, or we can't get a part, or we don't have a trained operator – all of those things impact our ability to put product through and get it out to our customers," he concludes.

Davis and Ude agree that as a supplier, Standard Finishing Systems is exemplary.

"Often, we have conversations with suppliers and we express our needs – what we need a piece of equipment to do, or how we need it to fit into a workflow – and they come back to us and say, 'Well, we've never done that before.' To me," Davis asserts, "that's no answer. Just because you've never done it doesn't mean that it shouldn't be done. Standard Finishing gets that."