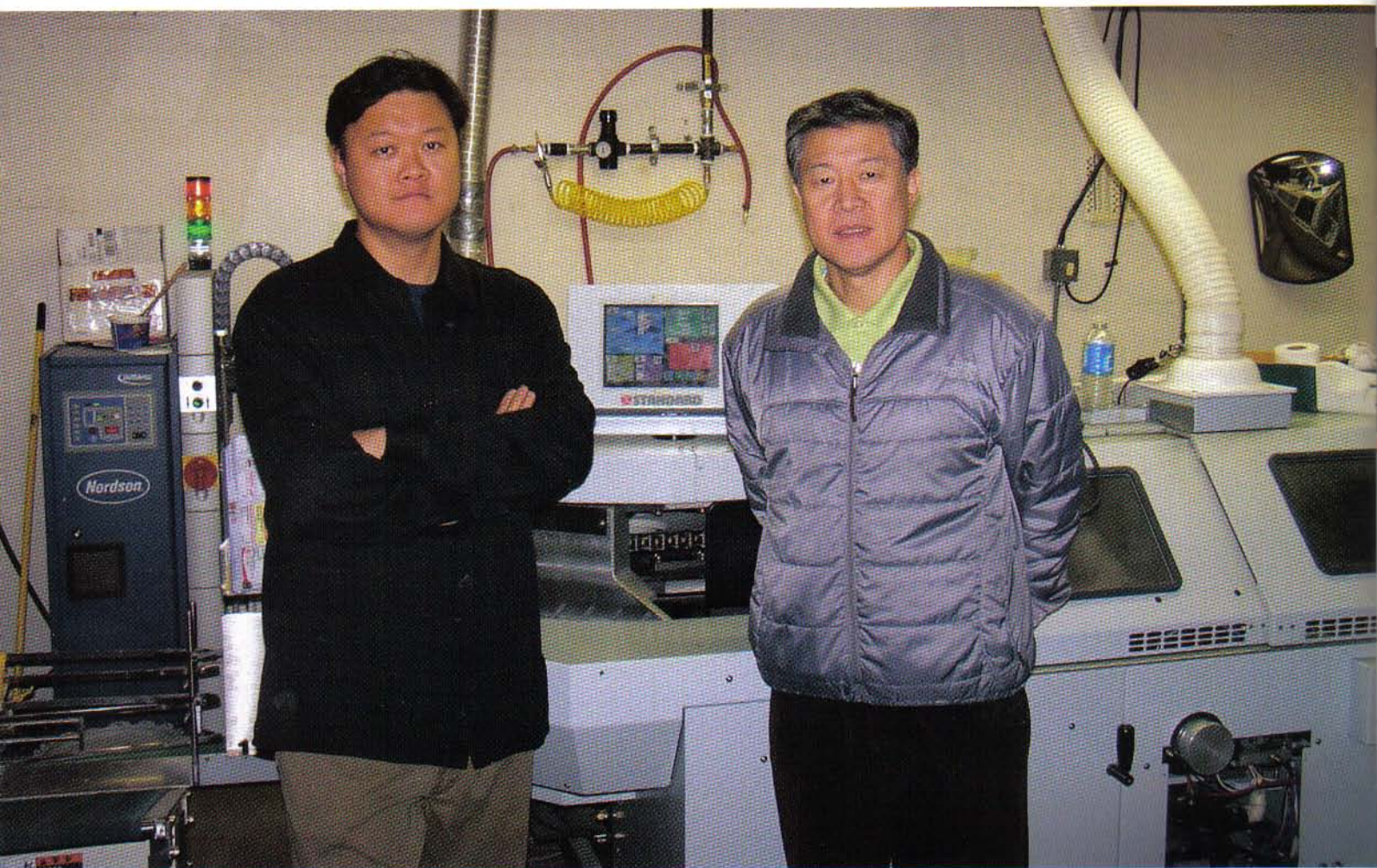


## Case Study



# Family Binding Finds Opportunity in Changing Market

By Dianna Brodine

The bindery landscape is changing. Small printers are being consolidated by larger entities. Printers are installing their own binding and finishing equipment, in hopes that bringing operations in-house will reduce overall expenses. These factors lead to a smaller customer base and fewer 'bread and butter' jobs to keep a business going between larger or more difficult projects.

Jimmy Yeo, general manager of Family Binding in Norcross, Ga., understands the changing landscape and has

embraced the opportunities it provides to his bindery. With the help of updated equipment and a willingness to seek out new business among larger printers, Yeo has positioned Family Binding as 'the place' to send small booklet, perfect binding, and mechanical binding jobs.

**For the Customer Who Wants It All** Family Binding launched its binding operation in 1995 as a small 'mom-and-pop shop' creating booklets. Today, Family Binding partners with trade binderies to fulfill their small-run

production needs. The company offers bookletmaking through perfect binding, saddlestitching, plastic coil binding, and wire-o binding; folding; collating; diecutting; lamination; pocket folders; and foil stamping and embossing.

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### PHOTO

Family Bindery general manager Jimmy Yeo (left) and company founder and president Bong Hyun Yeo stand in front of their PUR-equipped Standard Horizon SB-07 perfect binder.

“We have everything under one roof and it provides a lot of convenience to printers,” explains Yeo.

Through the years, Family Binding has focused on the needs of small printers as its primary customer base. With more than 200 customers, Yeo explains, “Our biggest customers are only five percent of annual sales. We have a lot of small customers by choice.” The majority of those customers came to Family Binding through word of mouth, rather than through extensive advertising.

However, in the last five years, Yeo has observed the small printers going away, while the big printers continue to grow. This has actually turned into an advantage for Family Binding because of the economies of scale. “The big printers may have booklet-making equipment on site,” explains Yeo, “but they do not want to stop their large press runs to set up for a 500 book job. It’s easier and more convenient to send the project to Family Binding.”

With an eye on the needs of larger printers, last year Family Binding purchased a Standard Horizon StitchLiner saddlestitching system with four VAC collating towers and in-line ST-40 stacker. “The StitchLiner allows us to get into saddlestitching for larger booklets,” says Yeo. “We had been doing smaller booklets, but only up to 100 pages. The StitchLiner gives us capacity up to 160 pages.”

Bridging the gap between conventional bookletmakers and saddlebinding lines, the StitchLiner allows sheets to go from press to cutter to binding machine, so booklets are completed without signature folding. Mark Hunt, director of marketing for Standard Finishing Systems, says, “When you look at total

job production costs – set-up and run-time, labor, etc. – you can turn jobs quickly with a very favorable ROI.” Another benefit for Family Binding is the automation available with the StitchLiner. The fully-automated set-ups increase short-run efficiency, providing the very benefit large printers are looking for and increasing profit margins.

#### Adding PUR Capabilities

Yeo recently has added a new service for those customers searching for PUR perfect binding, rather than the typical hot glue EVA application. Family Binding purchased a Standard Horizon

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SB-07 seven-clamp perfect binder in December of 2007, modified for PUR by local Standard dealer Paper Handling Solutions. “One of the reasons we got into PUR is that it allows us to get our foot in the door with larger binders. This gives us diversification,” Yeo says. “We’ve always done hot melt glue, but some customers were concerned that the hot-melt method wasn’t as effective for aqueous paper.”

“PUR adhesives (polyurethane reactive) have become very popular, especially for binding coated stocks,” explains Hunt. “It’s more aggressive than conventional hot-melt EVA, for stronger binds on digital color output. And PUR has a flexible, lay-flat quality that’s especially attractive for applications such as memory and photo books.”

Based on volume alone, the equipment is a success. The machine has been installed for approximately a month and already Family Binding has run more

than 450,000 books. Yeo is excited by the possibilities the new equipment offers. “Just the volume we’ve done already proves that we could run larger jobs. We haven’t started advertising the new capability, but the machine is already running every day.”

Why did Family Binding choose Standard Horizon equipment? Yeo looked at other equipment at GraphExpo, evaluating the possibilities partially on price and footprint. “We only have 24,000 square feet,” says Yeo, “and the Horizon fits us perfectly. We also were able to customize the machine based on the space we had. Our Horizon is hand-fitting, with no gathering section. We already have a gathering machine and it didn’t make sense to duplicate equipment in limited space.”

With smaller runs of 50 to 5,000, Family Binding relies on the fast set-up time provided by the new Standard Horizon equipment. “These machines are ‘pick up and go’ – very user-friendly,” explains Yeo. Hunt concurs: “As run lengths decline, trade binderies need quick set-ups to efficiently process more jobs through their shop. Long set-up times equate to high labor costs. The automated features provide the ability to memorize all set-up parameters, with instant recall to save time when running recurring jobs.”

At Family Binding, the company is still dedicated to the small printers it has served for more than a decade. However, a changing industry requires changes in the business plan. Family Binding is moving forward with new equipment and fresh capabilities to enhance its services to larger companies as consolidations occur within the printing industry. It’s a strategy that equals success for this Georgia bindery. ■